

THE NEW AVENGERS

ANNUAL



AUTHORISED EDITION



THE NEW AVENGERS

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It's a tough life in the Avengers game, and our three heroes have to be constantly on the alert for danger. They're likely to be attacked at any time, and from all sides, which, for anyone less highly trained than the New Avengers, could mean a very short career indeed!

But all the electronic gadgetry of the super-spies is not for John Steed and his companions, though they'd be the first to admit that it can be useful at times. Personal radios are a must, of course, and Steed's only concession to gimmickry is to have a miniature transceiver built into one of his many bowler-hats . . . but apart from that, electronics are used sparingly . . .

The reason is simple enough. Gadgets can break down, can be jammed by the opposition, can even give the wrong answers. And so the New Avengers have learned to be totally self-reliant, depending on their own knowledge and skills to get them out of sticky situations. Each one of them has developed individual specialities, so let's take a look at them one by one . . .

JOHN STEED, of course, is far too much of a gentleman to get involved in violence . . . except when it's absolutely necessary! Like all agents, he has been thoroughly trained in unarmed combat and the use of firearms, being a crackshot with almost any gun you care to mention. And, being an English gentleman, he's also well acquainted with the venerable art of fisticuffs.

Being a well-dressed man about town, Steed naturally has a selection of bowler-hats, some of which are as useful as they are decorative. One, for instance, has a steel crown, ideal for protecting his head from attack . . . and quite handy for knocking out the opposition as well. Another has a steel rim, which can be spun through the air with deadly, cutting effectiveness.



INTRODUCING THE AVENGING **NEW AVENGERS**



And where would a gentleman be without his brolly? Steed wouldn't be around at all without it, that's certain, for it's got him out of more than one scrape in the past. Rolled up, it becomes a weapon of many parts: the handle can be used for tripping or hooking an opponent's arm, the point can be used for jabbing, and the whole length of the umbrella can be used to fend off attacks. Added to that, Steed's umbrella also doubles as a sword-stick, with a long, thin blade hidden in the brolly shaft. And Steed's knowledge of fencing is, like everything else about him, impeccable...!

Nowadays, with two younger assistants to help him, Steed doesn't find himself in the thick of things quite as often as he used to. But that means that he can more fully use his two major weapons... his agile mind... and the vast experience he's built up after years in the field.





PURDEY . . . well, no one in their right mind would want to hit the lovely Purdey, would they? But when a misguided villain actually does get such a foolish notion into his head, he invariably finds himself in a lot of trouble . . . for the lithe young ex-ballerina swiftly turns into a raging tigress!

Of course, the first problem is getting near her, and being an excellent shot with almost any kind of gun, that's a difficult enough task in itself.

That old fashioned score-settler, the brick in the hand-bag, isn't Purdey's style when it comes to close combat. She's picked up a myriad tricks in the course of her travels round the world, including studying Chinese martial arts during a stay in Peking. She's also well versed in a style of fighting modelled on the mysterious and secretive French martial art of Panache . . . an art so mysterious that it isn't even off the secrets list yet!



Being a former ballerina, Purdey likes to fight with her feet, delivering kicks from a wide variety of angles. But if all else fails, she also packs a handy right cross . . . and that's provided a 'punch-line' on more than one occasion . . . !



MIKE GAMBIT completes the team and is, perhaps, the toughest of them all. He's certainly the fastest of all, being an ex-racing driver.

Gambit came up in a hard school, starting with a spell in the regular army. He rose to the rank of major in the crack Parachute Regiment, then gave that up for an even rougher life as a mercenary soldier in Africa, where he had to deal not only with enemy soldiers but crocodiles as well. Needless to say, he came through it all, and the experience has served him well in the Avenging trade.

The marksman of the team, more than any other, Gambit is a crack-shot with a gun, with dead-aim from almost any range. Especially excellent with a pistol, he's frequently seen in deadly action with his double-handed grip, ensuring almost absolute accuracy. But he's versatile, too . . . and almost as deadly with a bow and arrow as he is with a gun.

Gambit is experienced in most methods of unarmed combat, adding the skills he

learned as Steed's companion-in-arms to those he learned in the army . . . with judo and karate high on his list of specialties. All in all then, like his companions, Gambit is not a man to be tangled with . . .



FANGS



FOR THE MEMORY!

THE INVITATION HAD SEEMED INNOCENT ENOUGH TO PETER PETERS, EVEN IF THE LOCATION WAS ECCENTRIC. HE'D BEEN ASKED TO MEET AN OLD FRIEND FOR A FEW DRINKS. BUT THERE WAS ONE THING HE HADN'T REALISED UNTIL NOW...

NO! KEEP
AWAY FROM ME!
YOU'RE MAD!

... THE DRINKS ARE ON HIM!

AND THEN IT IS OVER

EXPERTLY
DONE, COUNT.

NATURALLY...
NOW, HELP ME
WITH HIM! HE CAN'T
BE LEFT HERE!

AAAAUUUGH!

LATE THE NEXT AFTER-
NOON, PETER'S BODY
IS FOUND, MANY MILES
FROM LONDON...

POOR OLD PETERS!
HE REALLY GOT IT IN
THE NECK! IF I DIDN'T
KNOW BETTER, I'D SAY
HE RAN INTO A
VAMPIRE!

PETERS HAD WORKED IN OPTICS...
SURVEILLANCE DEVICES AND SPY
CAMERAS... A VALUABLE MAN
TO LOSE...

WELL, I DO KNOW
BETTER, STEED! IT'S POISON...
HE WAS PUMPED FULL OF
VIROCRINE... PROBABLY INJECTED
THROUGH THOSE PUNCTURES!

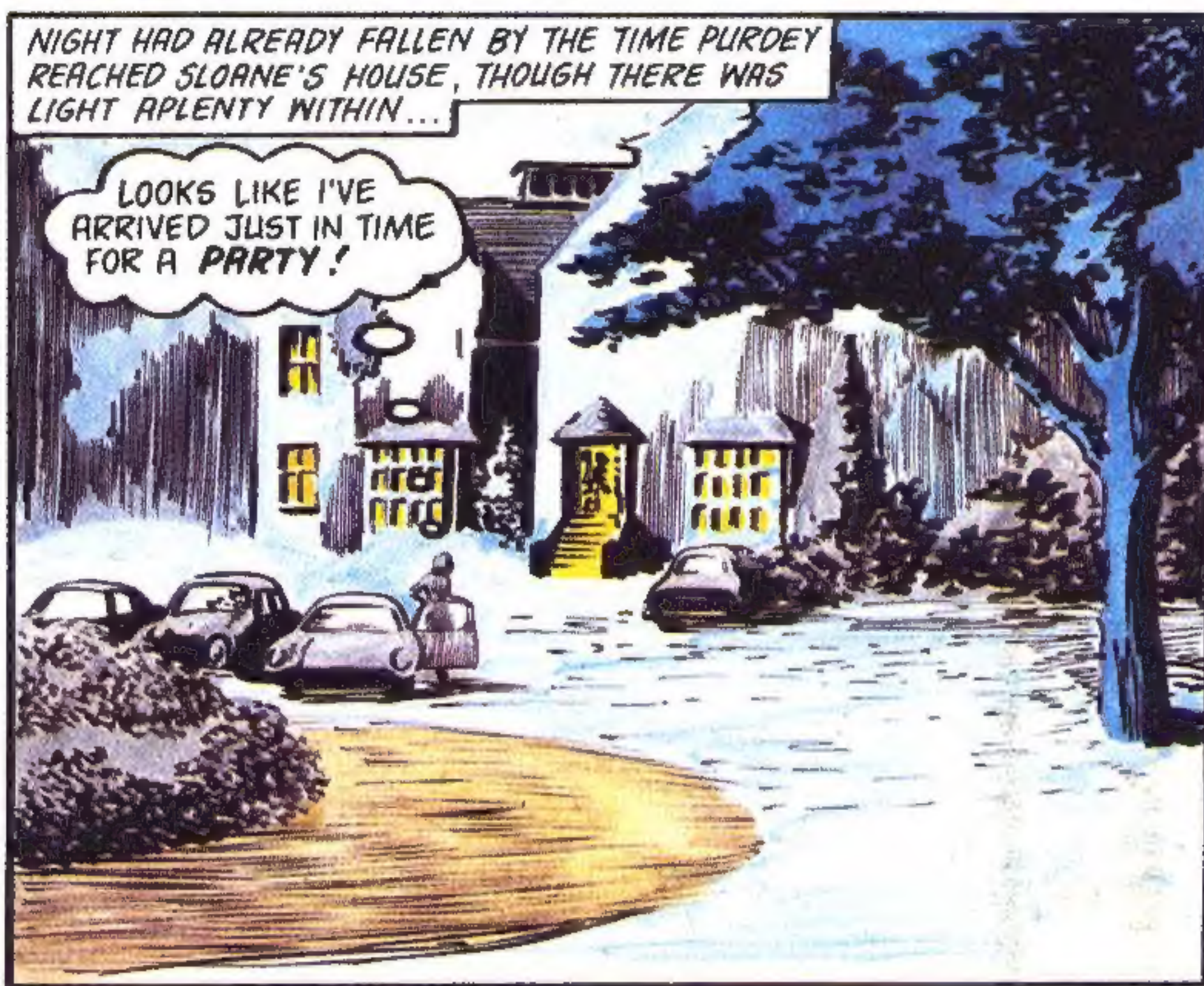
GAMBIT, CHECK WITH
RECORDS... PETERS' FRIENDS,
ANY BLACK SHEEP IN THE
DEPARTMENT, YOU KNOW... AND
YOU'D BETTER SEE HIS
CO-WORKER, SLOANE, PURDEY!

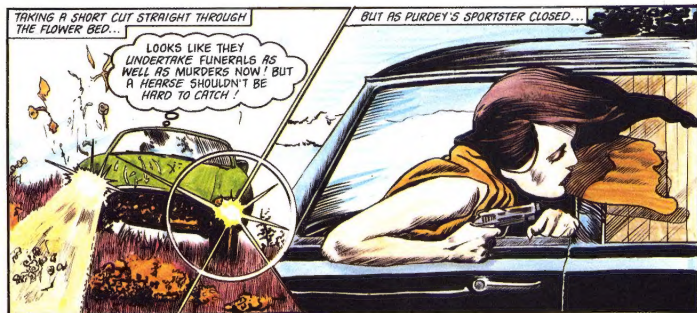
AND WHAT
WILL YOU BE
DOING?

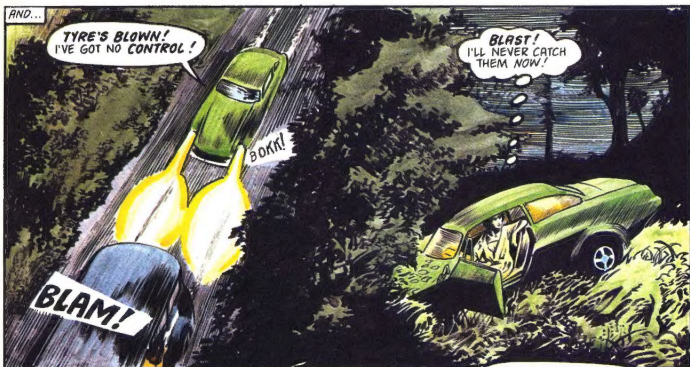
I NEED SOMETHING TO
GET MY TEETH INTO... I'M
GOING VAMPIRE HUNTING!
SEE YOU AT MY PLACE IN
THE MORNING!

NIGHT HAD ALREADY FALLEN BY THE TIME PURDEY
REACHED SLOANE'S HOUSE, THOUGH THERE WAS
LIGHT APLENTY WITHIN...

LOOKS LIKE I'VE
ARRIVED JUST IN TIME
FOR A PARTY!





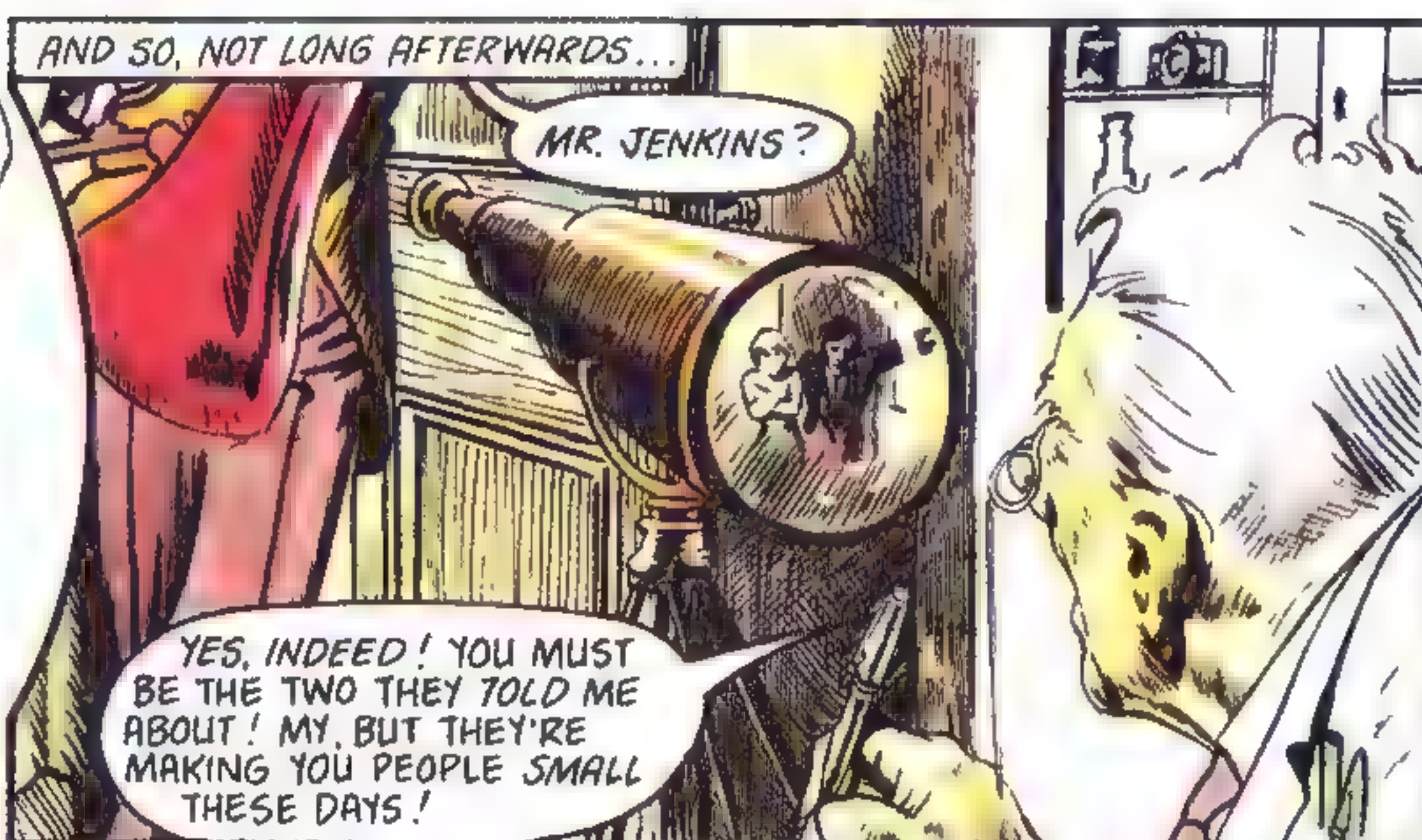




YOU TWO HAD BETTER LOOK AFTER JENKINS. I'LL GO AND STAKE OUT THE FILM STUDIO.

YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG END OF THE SCOPE... I MEAN STICK!

SOMEONE AT THE DOOR... I'LL GET IT!



AND SO, NOT LONG AFTERWARDS...

MR. JENKINS?

YES, INDEED! YOU MUST BE THE TWO THEY TOLD ME ABOUT! MY, BUT THEY'RE MAKING YOU PEOPLE SMALL THESE DAYS!



BUT OUTSIDE...

HELLO, I'VE GOT A MESSAGE FOR MR. JENKINS. A PHONE NUMBER HE WANTED.

HMM! YOU COULD GIVE ME YOURS WHILE YOU'RE ABOUT IT!

BEFORE EITHER GAMBIT OR THE GIRL COULD REACT, PURDEY MOVED WITH STUNNING SWIFTNESS...

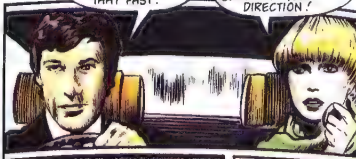
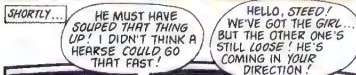
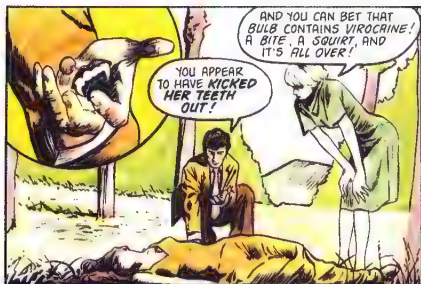
AAAAIIII!



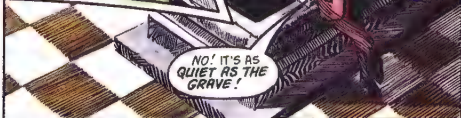
THEN...

GET AWAY FROM HER, GAMBIT! SHE'S THE ONE WHO KILLED SLOANE LAST NIGHT!



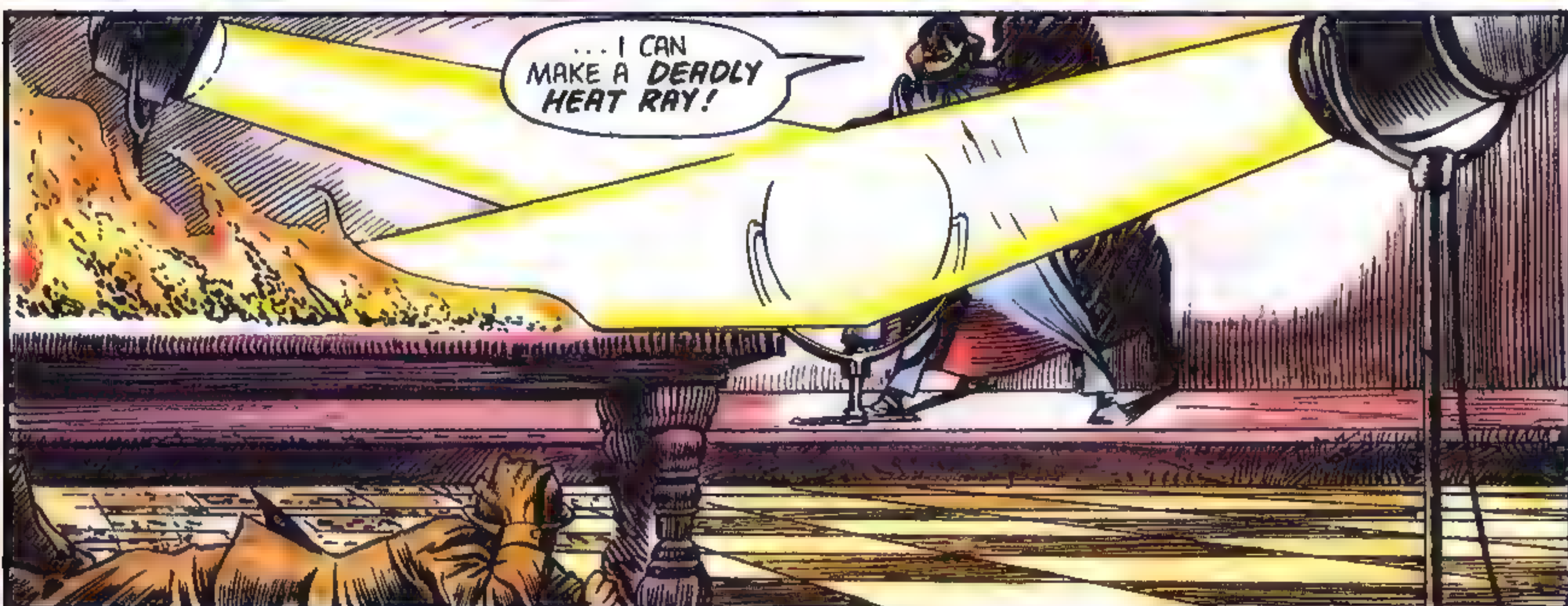
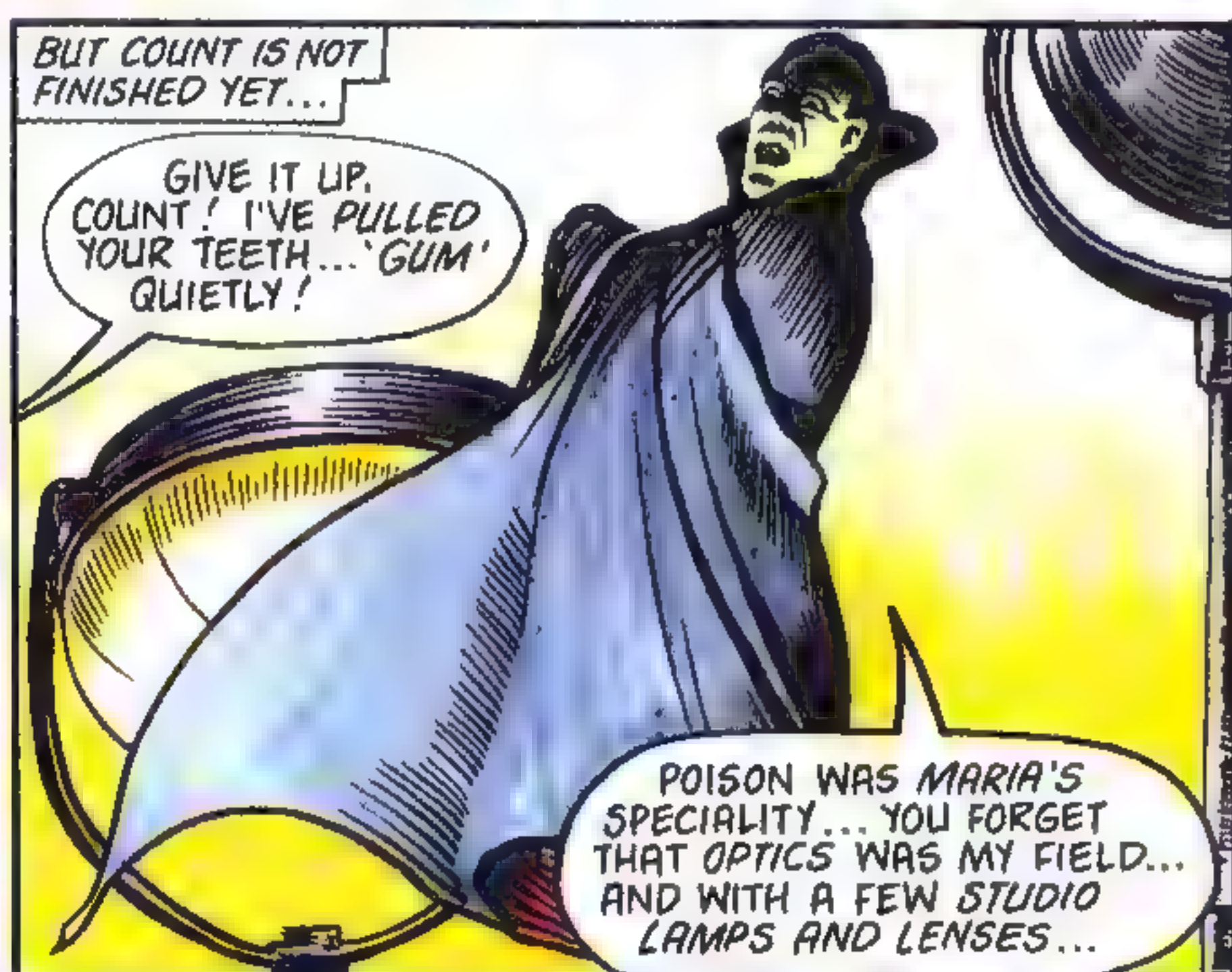


AND AS THE CHASE GOES ON, STEED CONTINUED HIS SEARCH...



AND THEN, WITH PURDEY AND GAMBIT NOT FAR BEHIND, COUNT RETURNED...





AT THAT MOMENT, PURDEY AND GAMBIT
ARRIVE TO SEE...

BLAM!

THE LENS
GAMBIT! SHOOT
THE LENS!

AND GAMBIT IS A
CRACK SHOT...

NO! GOT TO
ESCAPE! YOU'LL
NEVER CATCH
ME...

PING!

BUT FEW MEN COULD MATCH PURDEY'S
LITHE SPEED...

... OR HER ATHLETIC FIGHTING
SKILL...

HA-AH!

UUUGH!

AND AS COUNT FELL TO HIS 'TOMB'...

HELP ME
MOVE THIS AND
WE'LL SLAB HIM
IN PRISON!

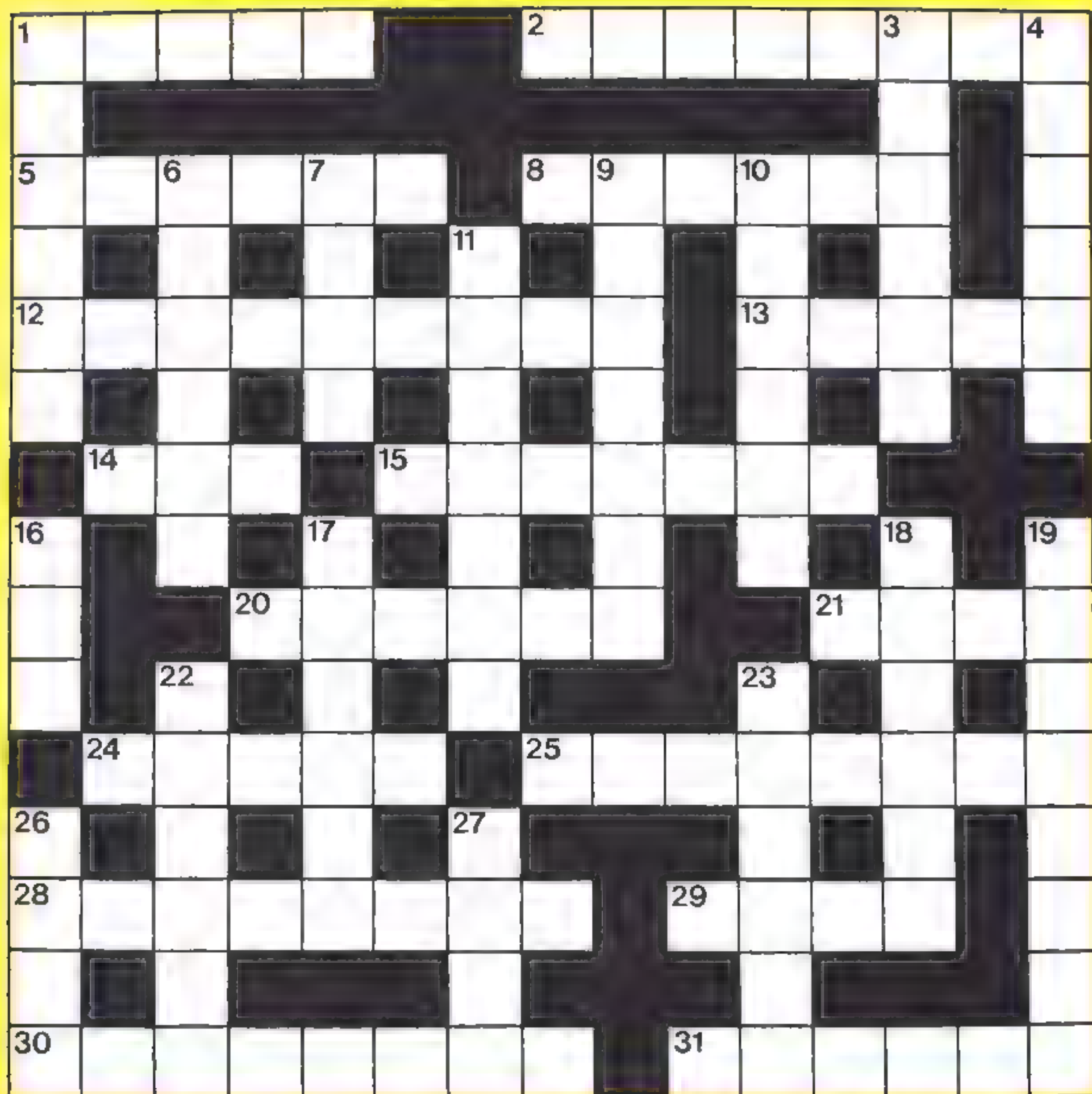
THAT REALLY
PUTS THE LID ON
THIS CASE!

WELL, ONCE AGAIN
THE WICKED COUNT
IS LAID TO REST! WHAT
DO WE DO NEXT?

A STAKE
THROUGH THE HEART?
NO, A STEAK ON A PLATE,
I THINK... I'LL BUY BOTH
OF YOU DINNER!

EXIT

THE END.



THE NEW AVENGERS CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

1. Country where Cathy Gale's husband was a farmer(5)
2. Surname of the actress who played 26 Down(8)
5. ——— Parker played the part of 'Mother's' assistant(6)
8. Screen surname of the new male 'Avenger'(6)
12. Occupation of Emma Peel's late husband(4,5)
13. Diana Rigg was often seen behind the this of a Lotus Elan(5)
- 14 & 28. What the series is called now(3,8)
15. You might find him involved in a 'stick-up'(7)
20. Joanna Lumley's birth-sign(6)
21. Where Tara King studied in

- London(4)
24. Name of the second Great Dane used in the first series(5)
25. Steed is seldom seen without this(8)
28. see 14 across
29. Real surname of the new male 'Avenger'(4)
30. Part played by Diana Rigg(4,4)
31. Where Purdey learned her martial skills(6)

CLUES-DOWN

1. Most of the Avenger ladies have been skilled in this(6)
3. He is head of The Avengers(6)
4. Patrick ——— plays the part of 3 Down(6)
6. Fishy food, found in bed?(6)
7. The Avengers would fight against trafficking in this(4)
9. 19 Down's occupation(7)
10. Important part of Steed's ensemble(6)
11. 19 Down as an accomplished pilot should be able to fly these(7)
16. Car that Purdey drives(3)
17. Type of driver that 8 Across was(6)
18. Type of dancing Purdey is good at(6)
19. Character played by Linda Thorson(4,4)
22. 26 Down was an anthropologist at the British one(6)
23. What Steed would most likely be shooting at in Scotland(6)
26. Screen surname of the first Avengers lady(4)
27. Faithful like the Avengers are(4)

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE PALACE

Purdey examined John Steed's outfit and nodded approval. When he tilted his bowler at a more jaunty angle, however, she shook her head and said, "Really, is that the way to greet the Queen!"

Mike Gambit got to his feet and joined the pair by a window overlooking rolling lawns and landscaped pools. "How many decorations does this make?" he asked.

"Three," Steed replied without bragging.

"Perks of the trade," Purdey joked.

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," Steed retorted, puffing out his chest. "I really do deserve some form of recognition."

Gambit expressed feigned disgust. Inwardly, he was very proud of the occasion. If ever a man *did* deserve an honour it had to be John Steed. A man who had given his all for Queen, country and department. In a way this was a moment for them all to share.

Purdey opened her purse and removed a gold-plated automatic from it. "I'd better leave this behind," she said.

"No . . ." Steed hesitated, added with a wry grin, "We can trust you not to make an assassination attempt."

Gambit frowned. It was most unusual for them to carry firearms when going on a mission such as this. After all, he reasoned, Steed's visit to the

Palace was strictly social. *Or was it?* "There's something you haven't told us, John," he said.

Adjusting his lapels and the flower in his buttonhole, Steed said, "I've had a roundabout threat that I shall never reach the Palace!"

Purdey slipped the automatic into her purse again. "From whom?" she asked, tight-lipped.

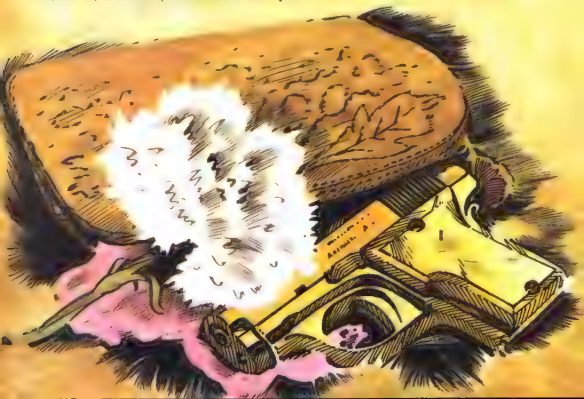
"Lev Petrovskii!" Steed answered nonchalantly. "It seems he has managed to slip back into Britain from a trawler making a supposedly innocent call at Aberdeen for supplies."

Gambit pursed his mouth in a whistle. He knew all about the Russian master-spy. A little before his time but men like Petrovskii kept turning up under the strangest circumstances and all agents were fully briefed on their past activities. Like how John Steed and Emma Peel had outwitted the man and exposed his scheme for an infiltration of the General Staff with the result he had been hastily shipped back to Moscow in disgrace.

"Didn't they call Petrovskii the 'Man with a hollow leg'?" Purdey asked.

Steed smiled as memories flooded back. "Ah, yes—his fondness for vodka earned him that nickname. It is said he never went anywhere without a spare suitcase full of the stuff!"

"So all we've got to look for is a Slavic type carrying a case marked 'Vodka' . . ." Gambit joked. . .



By mid-morning, Purdey had double-checked their official chauffeur and had a trustworthy mechanic go over the car which would transport John Steed to Buckingham Palace. Wearing a frothy creation covered with huge flowers and a hat to match she looked beautifully elegant. The type of English rose who could suffer silently but never indulge in anything unladylike.

Waving Steed farewell, Gambit got into his car and followed at a respectable distance. He felt slightly uncomfortable in an evening suit with his gun nestling under an armpit. He told Purdey seated next to him, "I think we're treating this threat too seriously. What could possibly go wrong driving down The Mall?"

Purdey searched the passing traffic for a familiar face. "Petrovski had a reputation for daring," she reminded. "He took chances no other spy would contemplate..." She sat upright, staring at a huge TIR-truck which cut dangerously across their lane.

"Stupid clot!" Gambit muttered and geared down to avoid a collision.

"Get round him!" Purdey yelled, at the same time seeing a second truck speed by... and another hot on its heels.

Gambit tried to make space, only to find that the trucks had him neatly fenced in. For a split-second he thought about mounting the kerb and using the wide pavement as a makeshift road but tourists by the dozen cut for a stroll cut short that notion.

By now the trucks were grinding to a halt, forcing Mike to stop as well. He jumped from his car, rushed up to the driver ahead of him. "Get this thing off the road," he shouted angrily to a menacing Continental type.

Purdey, too, had left their car. Running past startled pedestrians she raced to catch up with Steed's limousine which was barely to be seen in the middle of a traffic jam. Something kept hammering at her brain—a premonition of danger. A fear brought about by the swiftness of the hold-up!

Several people milled about Steed's car. Purdey pushed a few aside, breathed a sigh of relief when she spotted John Steed aloofly standing by the dented bonnet of his vehicle whilst his irate chauffeur argued with a vicious looking City gent brandishing a wallet and demanding an exchange of insurance company names.

"Be a darling and let Mike drive me the rest of the way," Steed said as Purdey came to him. "You can sort this lot out..." He waved his furled umbrella and sauntered off.

Gambit swore under his breath and returned to his car. It had taken four attempts in German, French, Dutch and Italian before he made the Continental driver understand him. His bad-temper vanished when he got into his car and found Steed sitting there with a huge grin.

"You're elected," Steed said. "Purdey's following in my vehicle." He stared at the ignition switch. "Well, let's go! I have an appointment with Her Majesty..."

Purdey wandered past Steed's room and hesitated outside his open door. She could see his clothes neatly laid across a bed, hear a shower running in the bathroom. She smiled to herself and again marvelled at the man's coolness. He had been so perfect at the investiture. So right for the great occasion.

Mind you, she thought, it had been a shame he left the Palace in a damaged car!

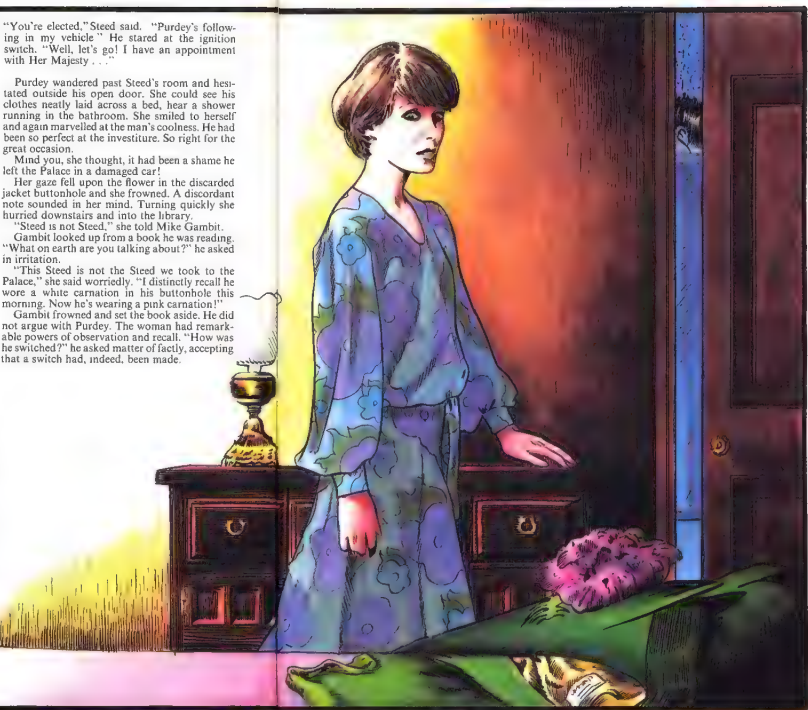
Her gaze fell upon the flower in the discarded jacket buttonhole and she frowned. A discordant note sounded in her mind. Turning quickly she hurried downstairs and into the library.

"Steed is not Steed," she told Mike Gambit.

Gambit looked up from a book he was reading. "What on earth are you talking about?" he asked in irritation.

"This Steed is not the Steed we took to the Palace," she said worriedly. "I distinctly recall he wore a white carnation in his buttonhole this morning. Now he's wearing a pink carnation!"

Gambit frowned and set the book aside. He did not argue with Purdey. The woman had remarkable powers of observation and recall. "How was he switched?" he asked matter of factly, accepting that a switch had, indeed, been made.





"During the traffic tangle!" Purdey said. "Somehow, somehow, they . . ." She blinked owlishly. "Petrovoski!" she hissed. "In all that confusion he must have kidnapped our John Steed and replaced him by a ringer!"

Taking a gun from his holster, Mike Gambit nodded and proceeded upstairs—followed by Purdey. Hiding the gun behind his back, Gambit opened the bathroom door and faced a naked, soaked Steed. "What was it you said about a spare suitcase, John?" he asked, pretending casualness.

Steed's eyes narrowed and he whipped a towel round his middle. "Can't it wait, Mike?"

"Not really . . ." Gambit laughed, fooling the other. "We weren't sure which suitcase you meant."

"Any suitcase will do," Steed said, trapped.

The gun in Gambit's hand came into sight and hard hazel eyes bore into the phoney Steed. "Where is he?"

"How did you . . . ?"

"The carnation!" Gambit explained. "Purdey has an eye for colours!"

The ringer Steed whipped his towel off and flicked it at Gambit, the wet material curling round gun and gunhand. He jerked, throwing Mike off-balance—and a knee came up with cobra-like speed to slam into Gambit's groin.

Purdey calmly placed hands on hips and as the counterfeit Steed charged past a groaning Gambit she executed one of her exquisite ballet-cum-Panache *hors de combat*. The front of one leg caught the man across his middle, knocking the breath from him. A quick step and her other foot landed like a battering-ram in his Adam's Apple. As he collapsed in an inglorious heap, Purdey sighed and draped a quilt over him. Only then did she help Gambit up.

"You didn't . . . ?" Mike asked, gazing down at the motionless man.

"No—I didn't kill him!" Purdey snorted, very unladylike. "Although it could be sheer agony for him when he tries to speak!"

Lev Petrovoski believed in the bizarre. He enjoyed his work providing Moscow gave him a free hand when it came down to playing the espionage game his own way. Always on the assumption the results justified a 'little' deviation from the KGB's accepted norm the Kremlin suffered the foibles of their 'man in England' and overlooked his penchant for spectaculars.

Hands cuffed and hooked over a pipe, John Steed found he could just manage to stand on tip-toes for five minute periods before being compelled to take his body weight on tortured wrists. How long he could hold out was a matter of some conjecture. Less physically inclined individuals would have heard the wrists snap ages ago.

Petrovoski—a large, broad faced man with flat, brown eyes and thick black hair—chuckled and set his near empty vodka bottle on a nearby table. "Your Queen would be very annoyed if she

knew she had bestowed an honour on a Soviet impersonator . . .

Steed forced a laugh. "Oh, she would appreciate the joke," he replied. "Between us, Petrovski, do you honestly expect this ruse to work?"

The Russian glowered, thumped his table. "Your bungling helpers will not discover the truth until it is too late!" he swore. He signalled two sullen, thick-set men wearing polo-necked dark sweaters to advance. "Fix it so that he cannot touch the floor," he snarled.

"A charming person," Steed remarked. "I must give you full marks for inventiveness, Lev . . ."

"And you for that tight upper lip," the Russian replied, swigging vodka again.

"The word is stiff," Steed bravely announced. "Stuff upper lip!" But how stiff? he wondered silently. Without the periodic rests on his toes he could be heading for a breakdown!

Purdey wore a cat-suit in snakeskin pattern, leg-hugging boots and carried a coil of rope over one shoulder. Night's all-embracing shadows formed a crazy backdrop beyond the lonely, tree-surrounded country mansion and swallowed up Mike Gambit's figure as he went in search of a rear entrance.

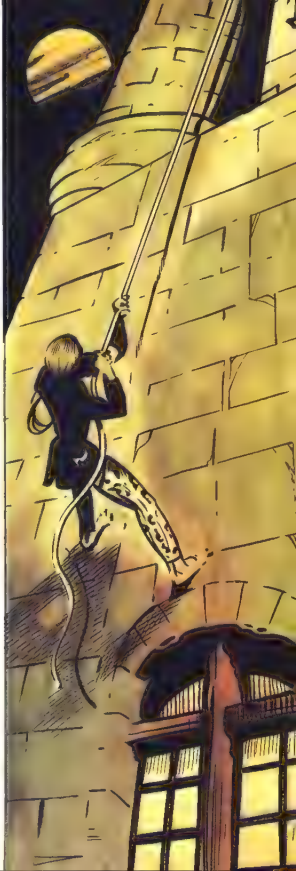
Thanks to some ingenious methods to induce Steed's double that a little careless talk was better than multiple injuries the Russian impersonator had quickly divulged Petrovski's whereabouts. She did not think the master-spy would be worried about betrayal. A cyanide tablet carried by the cosmetic-surgery ringer had not been used—again thanks to Gambit's confrontation in the bathroom. Not even the most dedicated agent took his suicide pill to the showers!

Picking a chimney perched on a sloping roof belonging to a recent kitchen addition to the mansion, Purdey made a loop in her rope and expertly lassoed this. She smiled into the darkness. A cowboy would have approved! Climbing up the secured rope she clambered across the roof, found a narrow ledge and inched along it until she gathered strength in her dancer's legs and suddenly lunged forward . . .

Petrovski jumped to his feet, eyes questioning. The sound of breaking glass and a thud on the floor above alerted his survival instincts. He flung Steed's handcuff key on the table beside his now empty vodka bottle. "Get him down!" he ordered one of his men. "You . . ." and he pointed at the second. "See what is happening!"

Gambit crossed what he assumed to be a drawing room, muttering curses. Did Purdey always have to announce her arrival in such a loud way? he asked himself. He had employed stealth, hoping to catch Petrovski unawares. Now . . .

He hugged a door and listened to a man pounding up a flight of stairs. Maybe Purdey had the right idea, he allowed. At least she was opening





the way for him to find Steed!

One small light came from a partially closed door down a long corridor. Gambit hurried to this, ears cocked for any sound. As he reached the door, he heard an anguished yell, found himself bathed in light from the stairs. He glanced round in time to see Purdey duck a woodmallet and her booted heel coming up as she whirled away from her attacker.

"Ouch," Gambit said, for the Russian who caught the heel smack in his navel.

Purdey followed up her advantage with three swiftly flowing kicks, the last sending her opponent over the bannisters. She coolly saluted Gambit and lightly came down the stairs.

Shaking his head in chastisement, Gambit flung discretion to the four winds and charged through the door before him. In one glance he saw Steed being lowered to the floor with Petrovski leveling a Luger at his head.

"I'll shoot," the Russian warned.

Gambit came to a halt.

"Call his bluff!" Steed ordered, feeling his blood beginning to flow normally again.

Gambit began to bring his own weapon up, slowly through.

"Leave him!" Petrovski commanded his second-string helper.

The polo-sweatered man glowered, straightened and moved off to one side of the room. He dug a pistol from beneath his sweater as he did and brought it up to cover Gambit.

"Let's see how good you are," Purdey's voice whispered from behind Gambit. "Take the goon and I'll drop Petrovski!"

Mike Gambit did not pause to consider the dangers to John Steed. Purdey could out-shoot any agent and he trusted her aim now. He drew air, prepared himself and, crouching fast as he wheeled and aimed, shouted, "Go!"

Purdey held her automatic in both hands, squeezed off a single shot over Mike's head.

Gambit took no chances. He loosed off four shots in rapid-fire. All finding the target, a neat grouping between the Russian's eyes!

Steed rubbed his wrists and applauded weakly. Petrovski heard the mild applause through pain erupting in his head. Blood streamed down his shattered gun-arm, the Luger dangling from a frozen finger.

Looking at the master-spy, Purdey laughed and suggested, "Could we not find an impersonator and use his plan to infiltrate the KGB?"

Steed gazed up at Petrovski's contorted features and shuddered. "Definitely not! One of him is enough for mankind. Now, two of me. That's something else again!"


Gambit raised his eyes to the ceiling and grinned. "The man is insufferable. Such modesty makes me sick."

MEET THE STARS...

The kingpin of the *New Avengers* is John Steed . . . and John Steed, of course, could be played by no one else than Patrick Macnee, who's made the character his own and developed it over the last seventeen years. Admittedly there was a gap of seven years between the old Avengers and the new, but even so, that's a large chunk out of anybody's career, and Patrick's career goes back a long way.

Patrick Macnee





He was born in 1922 in London, and his childhood was spent in a succession of public schools, finally culminating with Eton. His love of acting developed early, and he was even playing Shakespeare at the age of eight. By the time he was eighteen, he had won a scholarship to a drama school in London, but soon left there to join a repertory company, touring round the country in the early years of the war. He also made his first film appearance in 1942, as an extra in "The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp." After that, the Royal Navy took up his time until 1946, and there was no more acting until his discharge, after which he plunged back into plays and repertory again.

In 1952, though, given only one day's notice, he went to Canada to act on new-born Canadian television, acting in a series of plays. He was there until 1958, and became something of a star, at least in the area that the broadcasts covered, which was mainly around Toronto. For the next couple of years he toured around, playing New York and London as well, though still based in Canada, and then returned to England in 1960. He took a job producing a TV documentary of Churchill's "Valiant Years." And then the great opportunity came up.

There was a series running on television called "Police Surgeon," starring Ian Hendry, and the producer wanted to give him a sidekick for a few months. Patrick got the part as a mysterious man who helped Hendry, after his girlfriend was shot in one of the episodes. The name of the character Patrick played was John Steed, and shortly afterwards the title of the series was changed to *The Avengers*.

Ian Hendry was with the series for nine months, and then he left. Patrick's character of John Steed then took over as the leading role, accompanied by Honor Blackman as Cathy Gale, the first of the *Avengers* girls, who was later followed by Diane Rigg and Linda Thorson.

His style was sex, then, and *The Avengers* became a cult, first in Britain and then all over the world, gradually growing more outrageous as the years went by. Patrick and John Steed became household names everywhere, for nine years, until the series finally ended in 1969.

Patrick headed for his home in Palm Springs, California, as soon as the series ended. There was little work for him in this country, but in America he was in demand virtually all the time. Most of his work has been on the stage, and included tours of Australia and New Zealand, and a sixteen-month run on Broadway in the play "Sleuth." In between times, he's appeared as guest star in several popular American TV series, like "Alias Smith and Jones," "Columbo," "The Virginian," and so on, even playing Watson to Roger

Moore's Sherlock Holmes in a Hollywood TV film.

Then, when Patrick was in England to do a stage play, he agreed to do an *Avengers*-style commercial for French television. The French were shocked to discover that the series was no longer being made, and within six weeks had raised the money to get the project underway again. *The New Avengers* was born, and Patrick found himself back in harness as John Steed again.

The production team is pretty much the same, but Patrick is the only survivor of the old cast, and he tends to take slightly more of a background role now, acknowledging the fact that he is 55 years old and getting a little long in the tooth for front line secret agent work. But he's more than pleased with his two new partners, and derives great pleasure from the new series.

He has been married twice, though both have ended in divorce, and he has two children, a daughter, 24, and a son, 27, who directs documentaries for Canadian television. Patrick designs all John Steed's suits, and for relaxation likes reading and holding long conversations. He keeps in trim swimming, playing tennis, and taking long walks in the mountains near his California home.

But Patrick likes to work, too, and the *New Avengers* gives him plenty of scope for that. It's almost as if he's never been away . . . and hopefully he, and the character of John Steed, will be with us for a long time to come yet . . .

Patrick Macnee's best known character part is that of New Avenger John Steed. Here we see him in various moods from the series. *Left*: Showing that in the art of fisticuffs, he can beat the best. *Top right*: As a helicopter pilot. *Middle right*: Getting in the swim of things, and also using an ingenious ploy to beat an opponent and *below*: his own 'secret weapons'—his umbrella and bowler hat.





★ ★ AN EXPLOSIVE SITUATION! ★ ★

Have you ever thought what it must be like to be a member of The New Avengers? Well it takes a lot of skill and training and the game presented on the following pages will go a long way to finding out whether you have the necessary skill and cunning to be a member of this elite bunch of crime-fighters. But you might not want to be a New Avenger. If that's the case, then see if you can pit your wits against them. It still requires a lot of skill and the end result will be a game that will give hours of endless pleasure. Read the instructions on this page carefully before turning over to play the game.

OBJECT:

Somewhere in the maze of streets is hidden a bomb. 'THEM' are trying to get to it to set the fuses and explode the bomb while THE NEW AVENGERS are trying to reach the place in time to defuse the bomb.

YOU NEED:

A dice and six counters. One player can control 'Them' and another 'The New Avengers' or 6 players can control one member of each team.

TACTICS:

Go flat out to get to the bomb or deploy one team-mate to go for the bomb while the other two try and 'take-out' the opposition by landing on the same square.

METHOD:

Throw a 6 to start. Each player or team throws in turn. If a six is thrown then an extra free go is awarded. Thread your way through the 'maze' toward the bomb or opposition. Movement can be backwards, forwards, up or down.



No go areas. You cannot go into these squares merely use them as 'step-

ping stones' to get to the white squares.



Instructions on these squares apply to New Avengers only.



Instructions apply to 'Them' only.



Instructions apply to both sides.

NOTE:

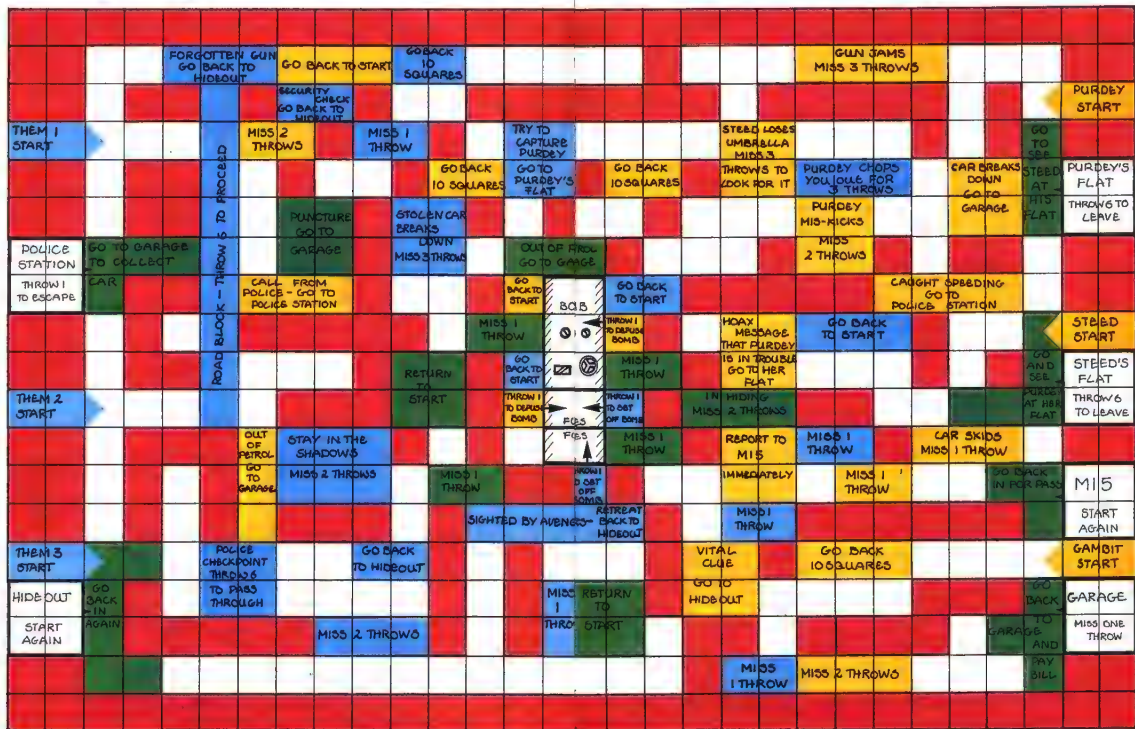
You must throw a 1 to get from the special adjoining squares to get to the bomb. If more than 1 is thrown then keep on moving the number shown.

The New

Avengers



An Explosive Situation!



MEET THE STARS...

Joanna Lumley

Latest and loveliest in a long line of *Avengers*-girls is Joanna Lumley, who plays the beautiful but deadly Purdy. And without doubt she's the perfect actress for the job, picked from a thousand applicants over three months of auditions. Originally, the name of the character was to have been Charlie, but it was changed at the last minute, and Joanna herself suggested the name of Purdy, after the famous and much-admired brand of shotgun. When she came up with that idea, they *knew* they'd chosen the right girl!

Joanna is 31, and lives in London. Her father was a major in the Gurkha regiment, and she was born in Srinagar, in Kashmir. The first eight years of her life were spent in the far east, travelling around as her father changed postings, in India, Hong Kong and Malaya. Then, when the family finally settled down in England again, she attended a small convent school, which she left when she was 17. Her ambitions lay in acting, but she failed to get into drama school and, after a course, took up modelling instead. At first she struggled through a period of fashion modelling, then switched to photographic modelling, appearing on the covers of fashion magazines, in the press and in television commercials, working everyday and travelling to all the major

European cities. She stuck it for three years, and then she got a chance of a small part, saying only three words, in a film called 'Some Girls do'.

Soon after that, she got a part in the James Bond film, 'On Her Majesty's Secret Service' with George Lazenby and ex *Avengers* actress Diana Rigg. That was followed by several small parts in minor films, some so minor that they were never even re-released!

Her career has been a series of ups and downs, sometimes busy, sometimes not so. She has appeared in a variety of theatrical productions, ranging from 'Don't just lie there, say something', a farce with Brian Rix, to more intellectual productions at the Greenwich theatre. And, as a change, she also appeared in a revue in Nottingham, doing songs and jokes.

Her television credits are long and equally diverse, though rarely doing anything with sustained star-status. She appeared as a one-off guest star in 'Steptoe and Son' and similar programmes, and appeared in eight episodes of 'Coronation Street'.

Joanna still picked up the occasional film part, as Jessica van Helsing, for instance, in 'The Satanic Rites of Dracula', with Christopher Lee. Then, for a couple of years, nothing

Farright: Pre-Purdy Joanna Lumley on a modelling assignment and **right:** as the beautiful New *Avenger* girl herself.





much happened, except for occasional guest appearances and television commercials.

Finally, though, when everything seemed to be turning a little sour, the *New Avengers* came on the scene, and Joanna made a great effort to get the part. The effort turned out to be well worth while, and Joanna is now having to get used to being a star . . . but it's a reward she well deserves after those years of slogging her way to the top.

The part of Purdey could have been made for Joanna, who at the height of 5 feet 8 inches is hardly a defenceless little woman. She did well in all sports at school, and now runs, rides, fences, skis, rides motorbikes and can drive better than the toughest men. She and Gareth Hunt also went through a gruelling two week training course before the series started, running, exercising and learning to do stunts and

fight scenes; a fitness programme which they found exhausting. Joanna also had extra ballet lessons to add poise to her fighting motions, and now she can even handle an army assault course as well as the paratroopers who usually use it. She does most of her own stunts, whether they be fight scenes or running along the top of rooftops, and has earned the admiration both of the viewers and the film crew alike.

Joanna was married briefly some years ago, and has a young son. Stardom has arrived after a long time of hard work, and she's not particularly impressed by the glamour of it, although she enjoys her work enormously. And millions of viewers all over the world enjoy her performances as well . . .

Above: There's no disguising the face of Joanna Lumley as Purdey. **Topright:** Joanna proving she does her own fight scenes and **right:** Joanna in the film 'Breaking of Bumbo'.



What a lousy way to run a business!

Purdey clasped the gun firmly in her two hands and gently squeezed off four shots. Dirt puffed behind the life-size figure target, the four bullet holes neatly clustered where a heart would have been in a human.

Mike Gambit nodded appreciation as Steed glanced at him with one of those uncommitted, polished smiles. No two ways about it, the woman certainly handled a pistol like an extension of her arms.

"That should satisfy the computer punchers," Steed acidly observed. He was not in favour of enforced shooting practice although regulations said that each of them had to undergo the routine 'for the record' every six months.

Purdey unloaded and slipped a fresh magazine into her gold-plated automatic. She looked radiant in a flowing multi-coloured poncho and bright green slacks. And her mobile face expressed an inner satisfaction when she gazed down the range at her target. "Funny," she laughed, "I always get good results when I imagine I'm shooting at a boudoir intruder!" Her eyes swung and fixed on Mike, accusingly.

Steed swung his furled umbrella. "Why don't you go for a quiet drive in the country?" he asked Purdey.

She nodded, tossed her poncho over a shoulder. "It's been ages since I saw mother," she remarked casually. "Mind you, father will insist I attend one of his services . . ."

As she walked away, Gambit shook his head. "I've heard a lot of bishop stories but I still can't get used to the idea that Purdey's step-father is a genuine bishop!"

Steed was halfway to his new car with Mike following. "It takes all sorts," he said. "Mind you . . ." and he chuckled. "There's an interesting conflict in that family. I sometimes wonder if Purdey will eventually convert the bishop or become one of his flock . . . Quite a speculation, eh?"

Gambit had other matters weighing on his mind. He worried about Purdey. Had John Steed told her what she was getting into? Or was she, as usual, rushing headlong through danger's ever open doors?

The pub occupied a section of the village green nearest a duck pond, with rambling old houses making up an elongated rectangle through which the minor road traced a macadam ribbon. Parking her car outside the pub, Purdey climbed out and set her anti-thief alarm. Not that she expected anybody here to nick the car. Amblecombe was a



dying village—one of hundreds suffering from the great rush of young people into the city centres.

Inside the pub a few locals sat drinking beer, old copper and brass creating a pleasant atmosphere. Or it should have been a pleasant atmosphere!

Purdey felt the animosity towards her, sensed the landlord's desire to do anything else rather than serve her. "A tomato juice with a dash of Worcestershire," she ordered. She took a stool and smiled.

"Sorry, miss," the burly, sullen landlord said. "We're right out of tomato juice!" He turned away, dismissing her.

"Make it grapefruit juice, then."

An old codger nearest Purdey gruffly called: "Beer only!" His weak, ancient eyes bore into hers. "We don't cater for strangers!"

"Are you the owner?" Purdey asked lightly.

"I am!" the landlord snapped. "And he's right—beer only!"

Purdey set both elbows on the bar, spoke plainly. "There is such a thing as politeness—and a licensing authority. I don't wish to cause trouble but . . ."

"You couldn't," the landlord scowled. "The magistrate is my brother!" He grabbed a cloth and pretended to wipe a glass.

"I refuse to leave without refreshment," Purdey stated. "Is the policeman another brother?" The threat in her cultured voice hit the landlord hard. He set his glass down and sighed the way a hangman does before opening the trap-door. Then, he snapped the cap off a grapefruit bottle and wandered down the bar for a glass. Purdey watched closely.

"Miss . . ."

Purdey turned to face the old codger.

"Why don't you leave?" the man asked.

Purdey shook her head in a refusal and turned back to the landlord. She didn't like the way he was shielding her grapefruit juice from sight as he poured it into a glass but she had to be content. Orders were orders!

The landlord took Purdey's pound note and gave her change. His eyes hooded as he watched her drink—almost as though expecting something to happen . . .

Gambit parked his car off the road and waited for Steed to get out before switching on his anti-theft alarm. He could see Amblecombe's small cluster of houses straight ahead and the village pub by the duck pond.

"Her car is missing," Stead said casually.

"I didn't get a bleep," Gambit mentioned.

"Did you expect one?" Steed twirled his furled umbrella against a tranquil scene of fields and blue skies.

Gambit did not reply. Instead, he buttoned his jacket and started to walk towards the village. He felt that every step was being watched by hidden spectators. When they entered the pub together

the watchers materialized in the shape of five men grouped at a table and a landlord who seemed slightly taken aback at having two strangers on the premises.

Steed smiled at the locals, spoke to the guv. "Would you mind letting me use your telephone, mine host? Our car has broken down."

"Telephone's out of order," the landlord snapped without a saving grace. He stared at a clock on one wall. "Time!" he called and hung a cloth over his beer-pumps.

Steed consulted his wristwatch. "A strange hour," he remarked. "I never can remember country closing time—can you?" He asked this from Gambit.

"I said 'Time,'" the guv repeated, settling any discussion.

Gambit ignored him. "We have half-an-hour. John . . . what's yours?"

Steed placed his umbrella against the bar, laid his bowler on a stool and got onto another. He smiled disarmingly, asked the landlord, "Have you seen my niece? She's . . ." He described Purdey and her car, ending with: "I suspect she would stop here for a tomato juice. She cannot pass a pub *en route*."

The landlord's eyes slitted, his face masking into an anxious hate. "No-one has been here today!" he said, fingers fiddling with a bar-rag nervously.

"No-one," an old codger repeated, confronting Gambit with a steady, loathing stare.

"I wonder . . ." Steed got to his feet and calmly opened the bar door. When the guv'nor tried to prevent him going through to the rear room, Steed placed a hand in the man's chest and pushed . . . sending him sprawling flat.

Gambit smiled menacingly and unbuttoned his jacket to show the gun under his armpit. The locals who had started to rise slumped back into their seats and let events go their own way.

Steed went into the back room, conscious of the aroma of stale cabbage in the pathetic furnishings and wallpaper. He crossed the room and into a hallway beyond. A slight noise from upstairs alerted him just in time. He stepped back—a wooden kitchen chair crashing to the floor at his feet.

"You okay, Steed?" Gambit's voice called.

"Fine—keep their heads down!" Steed climbed the stairs. His solid build glided over the treads, the old boards scarcely creaking as he went up . . . up . . . reaching the topmost step without mishap. He peered down a hall, observed the three doors off this. Well, he thought, here goes nothing!

Purdey's head ached to beat the drum. She tried to move—and couldn't. Her eyes opened and she groaned. The light from a barred window struck her and she shut her eyes again. She had seen enough to know they had tied her to a bed—during the time she was unconscious. She snuffed in disgust. A drugged grapefruit yet! How stupid

of her to fall for that oldest trick.

A noise outside her room made her open her eyes again. Twisting her head she saw a shadowy figure to one side of the door, arm raised and an old-fashioned chamber-pot held in the hand. She had to warn whomever was in the hall, but she couldn't. A gag in her mouth stopped all sound except the most muffled mutterings.



Steed hesitated with hand on the doorknob. Those muted gabbles could only come from Purdey! He wanted to laugh—he would not appreciate the word 'gabbles'. He slowly turned the knob, held the door open a fraction. An arm roped to a bedstead meant but one thing!

When Steed crashed into the room he kept an arm up to ward off any blow. He felt the chamber-pot brush his wrist and swung, lashing out with an iron-hard fist that landed against a soft chin. He stepped back and made a mental apology to the woman slumping unconscious to the floor for being ungentlemanly.

When he untied Purdey's bonds and removed her gag she cluck-clucked. "Don't dare say a word," Steed warned.

Laughing inwardly, Purdey asked, "Where is Gambit?"

"Watching the booze-hounds," Steed said. "What happened to you?"

"Doped drink!" Purdey straightened her gear and bent over the woman. Something strange about the hair made her reach out and pull...

"Theatrical make-up!" Steed announced as Purdey's finger smeared furrows across a head minus its wig. A head belonging to a man in his fifties. A fat, soft man able to pass himself off as a woman.

"It gets curiousest and curiousest," Purdey mentioned, quoting without permission. "Please explain now why you used me as a decoy and what is going on here."

Steed stationed himself by the room door. "Six miles from Amblescombe is an important weapons research range. We have been concerned about several leaks relating to top-secret tests carried out on field-guns and infantry ground-to-air missiles. Checks seemed to pin-point Amblescombe as a base for observations but no-one wanted to accuse the inhabitants of mass co-operation with an enemy. No-one except me..."

"Trust!" Purdey said sarcastically.

"However, I had an idea that perhaps it wasn't the inhabitants we were up against but..."

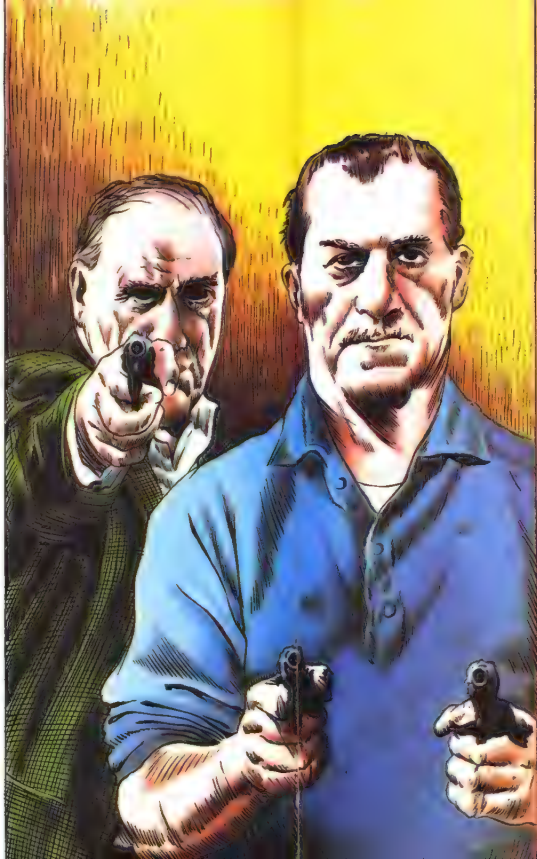
"But plants who had taken over the village!" a deadly voice said from the hallway.

Purdey sighed and Steed pulled a face. Three automatic-pistols pointed at their middles. The landlord of the pub appeared less sullen now, his grey eyes bright with triumph.

"John Steed," he said softly. "His Lordship will be pleased to hear we have you!"

Steed shrugged. He did not argue with automatic weapons over this range. When the landlord motioned for him to leave the room he did so, aware that Purdey followed close behind. His one hope was that Gambit had somehow not been overpowered...

Gambit lay on a carpet, hands behind his neck. He did not blame himself for what had been a disaster. A pub had too many entrances to guard



on one's todd. And when a determined gunman came up through the cellar trapdoor... Well, he was still alive and ready to kick and that had to count for something!

Footsteps sounded from behind the bar and Steed with Purdey on his heels came into the lounge. As Steed had the bar counter between him and the landlord's armed men he reached into his jacket pocket and dropped a white plastic toy on the floor, pushing it towards Gambit with his foot.

Gambit nodded to Steed and eased the toy under him—all eyes in the bar fixed on the new prisoners being herded into a corner.

"Get his Lordship," the gov'nor ordered the old coddler.

Steed asked, "Mind if I blow my nose?"

"Be extra careful," the landlord warned, the old coddler making a hurried dash from the pub.

Steed took a handkerchief from his trouser pocket—the movement cautious and aimed to attract attention.

Gambit moved the plastic toy from beneath him, twisted suddenly and pushed a plunger into what could be seen as a spaceman-type ray-gun. Steed cracked his handkerchief by a flick of the wrist!

And Purdey spun, one long leg catching the hapless landlord in the face—the kick taking her behind Steed.

A thin spray coming from the plastic weapon weaved from man to man, Gambit's aim as true with this novelty as with a firearm. As the spray splattered on skit it exuded a gas.

Steed helped Purdey collect the group's weapons. Gambit recovered his gun—the genuine article—and positioned himself by the window overlooking the village green.

"Must we wait?" Purdey asked.

"Yes!" Steed said. "His lordship is a powerful county figure. We've got to catch him with his deviousness showing."

"Where are the real villagers?" Gambit asked from the window.

"Probably locked up in his lordship's mansion," Steed said.

"We'll soon know—here he comes!" Gambit stared at the kilted figure of a large man walking before the old coddler in disbelief. "Be prepared for a characterization to make the Two Ronnies pale," he said.

Steed dusted a bar-stool and took a seat. "I'm ready," he laughed. "But I won't find it funny—you see, the missing lord of this manor is my cousin... that's why my suspicions were first aroused. Just a passing glimpse, mind you—but this intruder was wearing the wrong tartan..."

Purdey exchanged a sympathetic glance with Gambit, and said: "It takes all kinds—unfortunately!" Then she went behind the bar, saying: "I need something stronger than tomato juice..."

'THE BIG CAT'

the fast-fact stand for Leyland cars



When Steed takes off in his Jaguar on some urgent mission, he's also flying the flag for Britain's car giant Leyland Cars. You see, the Jaguar 5.3 Coupe that he drives, known in the studios as the 'Big Cat', isn't just a car that the studios fixed up. It's more than that, a public relations exercise for Leyland, and at the same time, a unique car for the suave Steed to drive.

The requirements, as far as the programme were concerned, were simply that the car should look spectacular for photographic purposes. There are prerequisites as far as the cameras go, little extras which mean so much on TV, and yet so little on the road. Apart from the basics that are involved in the spectacular field, there are additions like the electric roof for stunt purposes. But that's jumping ahead a little.

The man who fixed it all up for Leyland Cars was Alan

Zafer who at the time was in charge of Leyland's Radio and TV publicity. He decided that it would be a good idea if all the cast of the New Avengers drove Leyland cars which is why the odd Range Rover and MGB is scattered around the cast. After all, the previous Avengers always had racy cars, the idea couldn't stop with the latest series. Range Rovers and MGBs were all very well for most of the cast, but what of Steed? He needed something a bit special, something nippy and yet in keeping with his smooth character.

At the time, Leyland were also embarking on a programme of racing the 5.3 litre XJ12C (the C stands for Coupe, it's a two door) to take on the other European car giants racing over Continental circuits for up to 24 hours. This was a prestigious move for Jaguar, for twenty years previously, their D-type racing car was hard to beat in sports car racing throughout the world. Thus Jaguar

wanted to make a splash of their racing, and to bring focal attention to their cars, it was decided that the car Steed would drive should be at least outwardly similar to the racing car.

There were the spectacular advantages: the Jaguar on the road would look racy, its spoiler at the front moulding in with the wheel arches over extra wide tyres which in turn could be persuaded to give tyre smoking starts. Equally, the Coupe meant that it was a two door and that there were no pillars in the middle of the side window area, a photographic advantage.

The racing cars were being built in Warwickshire at Southam by a company called Broadspeed who specialise in building racing saloon cars. Outwardly, the racing Jaguars have their wide wheels, with arches to cover them so that in rain, the water isn't sprayed up into the views of other drivers. Furthermore, there's an extension of the bodywork at the



Steed looking as relaxed on a horse as he does behind the wheel of a fast car

front too where the bumpers should be, and this low apron, known as an air dam in the racing game, gives lots of stability when the car is going very quickly either around corners or in a straight line.

When it was decided that Steed would drive NWK 60P, the registration number of the Jaguar, it was generally thought that the best place to build the car would be the same premises as where the racers were built. Accordingly, a fairly elderly XJ12C, which had probably covered over 100,000 miles, was delivered to Broadspeed and it was they who built up the car.

Naturally, the most important parts of the car to be built were those that the cameras were going to see. Thus, the first things to be done were the front spoiler or air dam, and the wheel arches. These are carefully moulded from glassfibre and then blended into the existing bodywork. The same thing happens with the wheel arches which cover the extra wide wheels and tyres.

On the racing car, they run 14 inch wide tyres, special racing tyres made by Dunlop. To give the same illusion, ten inch wide wheels are run on the Avengers' Jaguar in comparison to the six inch wide tyres normally fitted to such a car.

However, on the racing car, the tyres are specially made for track purposes only. In the dry, they're slicks, without any tread at all in order to get as much grip from as much rubber on the road as possible. However, in the wet these tyres are very dangerous as they allow no grip so they don't really lend themselves for ordinary every day use, and they're illegal anyway for the normal road driver. With Steed doing his share of road use in his Jaguar, he couldn't use the racing slicks, but at the same time, it's very hard to find tyres of that size that are readily available for road use.



Side view of the Jaguar used by Steed in the series.

Thus, originally they used racing slicks with tread grafted onto the basic tyre, but this proved to be very twitchy on road surfaces, the car kept weaving, so they hunted some tyres in the United States which are now used.

Outwardly then, the Steed Jaguar is very similar to the racing car, but it's there that the similarity ends. In the racer, there's a fully race-developed engine giving power that corresponds to over 450 brake horse power, but even Steed, for photography purposes at least, doesn't need that much power and so the standard 5.3 litre engine stays in the Steed Jaguar. Even so, that engine gives a healthy 285 brake horse power.

Inside, unlike the racers which have lost some of their trim for weight reduction, the car is almost as standard, except that it's been completely retrimmed by Connolly in some of their excellent leather. The seat is standard, whereas one would find special racing seats in the Jaguar racers, Steed drives along in an ordinary biscuit coloured seat. To help the journey along, there's stereo radio, and a cassette player, while for rearward vision, the two mirrors beside the doors are remote controlled from within the car. One concession to the TV men is an electronically operated sliding roof for stunt work.

Indeed much of the driving done for the series is undertaken by stunt men and the principal thing that they find is that the car is really rather

twitchy due to the big tyres. But at the same time, even though the engine drives through automatic transmission, the tyres give an enormous amount of grip. This is really not what is required for the series; after all, Steed is meant to smoke the tyres on get-away and make it all look spectacular, so for this reason, water or even bleach that is used for smokey starts in drag racing, is put on the ground so that there's a spectacular affair.

The overall effect of the Jaguar, the Big Cat, is that it's so popular that road drivers

are asking Leyland for a cosmetic kit so that they can convert their Jaguars to Big Cat looks. However, with the unavailability of the big tyres, and the fact that the suspension hasn't been touched, and therefore the roadholding is not what it might be with the big tyres, Leyland are unwilling to market such a kit. Even so, it seems that some drivers have kitted out their cars to look very similar, and if the racers do well in 1977, then Leyland Cars, as well as having a nice outlet for their spectacular Jaguar, have really created quite an image.



The racing Jaguar being put through its paces.



MAYHEM ON CUE

GAMBIT leaps from his car which, slewing off the wet road, crashes into a tree trunk. Warily dragging himself to a nearby, dark house, Gambit telephones Purdey. Little does he realise that the pretty agent is forced to take his address, a gun held at her head. An hour later, cold and miserable, Gambit hears a car approach. Lights blaze inside the house now. What has Gambit to fear? Only Purdey knows where he is. He opens the door, finds two hulking hoodlums there. Both are armed, but Gambit slams the door in their faces. He races through the house, upstairs, into a bedroom. Gunfire shatters the night. Gambit knows he must make good an escape. But how? The windows are securely locked. He stands back, runs at one and smashes through, falling fourteen feet into a landscaped garden. He gets up, clothes torn and face bloody. He staggers to the hoodlums' car and crawls in. The ignition key is there. He fires the engine and, as the car spews dirt and driveway stone, one of the hoodlums appears in the front

doorway. The man has a shotgun and blasts the car windshield as Gambit slumps over the steering wheel, the car careening through undergrowth, to finally vanish over the edge of a deep pool.

That could be a series of events in a New Avenger episode. Poor Gambit! Actually, no such thing ever happened to Mike although that does not mean to say that production company partner and writer Brian Clemens would not have his second-string hero get into such a nasty fix.

Why we have given 'Mike Gambit so much to do in this example is to show how various stunts are done for your screen enjoyment. Here we have a leaping from a car, a car crashing head-on into a tree, a jump through a window, and a car plunging over a drop into water classics. All highly valued stunts for the large and small screen. And not routine, simple chores as some film critics would like us to believe.

Stunts are, when performed by expert stuntmen and stuntwomen, relatively safe. There are rules every true professional

stuntman must observe. *Safety first, second and last* is a good motto for blokes risking—if not life—every bone in the body. No matter how many precautions are taken, Old Lady Luck has a habit of saying enough is enough and removing her hand from a shoulder. Stuntmen are killed. Not many when compared against the fantastic number of stunts performed across the world's filmmaking centres. But death is inevitably present, and no-one jokes about that.

Let us begin with the easiest stunt in Mike Gambit's script. Leaping through a window.

Now nobody who has seen how glass cuts flesh to bits would want to deliberately jump through a window. Fortunately, they don't use *real* glass in films. They did way back when talkies first came along but, not long afterwards, cuts became things of the past with the invention of 'toffee' glass. Yes, 'toffee' glass! Manufactured by confectionery firms, these sheets of candy looked like genuine glass and, set into balsa wood frames, shattered like glass when a man or

animal crashed through it. There was only one thing wrong with 'toffee' glass. Certain slivers stayed sugar hard and sometimes penetrated the skin of stuntmen falling on them at an angle.

Nowadays even this minor chance is eliminated. The glass in a film stunt is made from newly discovered resins and can be crushed into a powder between finger and thumb without fear of penetration. And still it looks just like the window in your front room...

Gambit leaps from his car, etc. Stuntmen have been leaping, falling, pushed from cars throughout the history of movie spectacularism. Gambit, needless to say, did not leap from the car *in person*. The days of stars doing their own stunts died with Errol Flynn even although Steve McQueen has admittedly shown he can handle a motorcycle in some hair-raising escapades and Burt Lancaster is, without a doubt, a fine acrobat. But Flynn, who always insisted on being both actor and stuntman, was according to experts on the subject, the acme of a dual profession.

Back to Gambit—his leap is performed by a double who is also a stuntman. In the scene we visualized, the car crashes into a tree immediately after Gambit leaves his vehicle. Normally, stunts like this are done with the driver still inside the car. But the script is all important and so, for once, our stunter has to prepare for twin accidents. No sane individual would risk serious injury just opening a door and bowling out at 50 mph in ordinary street clothes. Similarly, crashing at the same speed into an unyielding tree demands head protection, roll-over bars, padded instrument panels and strong seat-



Top and middle: The handling of any fire-arm for stunt purposes is always strictly supervised. **Bottom:** Mike Gambit (Gareth Hunt) and Purdey (Joanna Lumley) are often called upon to take part in minor car stunts. **Right:** John Steed and Purdey ready for action.

belts.

It is not good a director saying 'Forget the crash gear, you're not going to be inside the car...' Things have a habit of going wrong and once that speeding vehicle is aimed at the target tree the stuntman is at the mercy of fickle fate. The door could, for instance jam. The tyres could, again, skid on the wet road surface and make a leap an impossibility.

Since the audience will be watching the car crash the stuntman can, thankfully, safeguard himself against injury on the leap. Padding, gloves, a wig covering a thin head protector are part and parcel of his gear. And the car will be rigged—petrol feed-line connected to a miniature tank holding just enough fuel for the stunt, main tanks empty, to prevent accidental fire—with all sharp edges removed, extra padding fitted securely, roll-bars fixed and windscreen removed.

For Gambit's—or his double's—dive into that deep pool the car boot would carry almost a ton of lead to make sure that the bonnet stayed surface-wards once the 'shot' was made, the stuntman would have a hammer beside him in case he had to break windows for an escape and, for the direst of emergencies, he would also insist on a bottle of oxygen plus a breathing mask to

keep him alive until a rescue team got to him.

Getting away from Mike Gambit, John Steed and the delectable Purdey for a moment, we come to that breathtaking spice of so many movies—the punch-up. *Arranging* a film fight is a specialized job. It has to be choreographed as a dance would be, rehearsed over and over again to eliminate any chance of a haymaker actually hitting the chin it is supposed to be aimed at and, typically of the movies, split into a series of 'takes' which show the stars and not the stuntmen who really carry the burden of making a punch-up look so mayhemious.

The credible film punch-up owes very much to a star who started out as a stuntman and even today is regarded as the biggest box-office draw in film-dom. According to Ralph Volkie, trainer of five champion boxers, "He's got the hardest right hand punch of any man I've ever seen, including Jack Dempsey!" That is praise, indeed. And the man?—why, none other than the 'Duke'... John Wayne.

Wayne's theory and practice of the classic punch-up are generally accepted by fight arrangers nowadays. The 'Duke' believed that a screen fight need only record about four punches from any camera angle as more would

become visually boring. This means that in a fight lasting, say, two screen minutes, the 'action' would be stopped every twenty or so seconds and a new camera angle set-up for the next 'take'. Punches to the head could, then, miss by about six inches. Punches to the stomach, normally screened to show the impact, did establish contact between closed fist and the opponent's belly but these were 'pulled' to avoid real damage. Kicks, next, are faked by camera angle and how the kicked person reacts to the blow.

To 'take' a fight scene is a lengthy process. Doubles must not be seen to be other than the stars. Close-ups of the actors have to contain facial expressions of effort, pain, determination, savaging and all those emotions we know belong to a pair of battlers.

Now you know what goes on behind the action camera. Knowing doesn't mean that the next time you watch the NEW AVENGERS there will be less interest when Steed, Gambit or Purdey swing into their act against the villains. Remember, it is what you actually see on the screen that counts, and so what if a little trickery helps the image along—a lot of effort and planning has been combined to give you a finished product worthy of the film-maker's art.



NO—TWIST

ALL THE TOP PEOPLE WERE AT SIR JAMES'S RETIREMENT PARTY—WITH STEED AND CO. ON HAND TO MAKE SURE THE PROCEEDINGS WENT SMOOTHLY!



THE ROYAL BALLET MISSED A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY WHEN THEY LET PURDEY GO!

[SUDDENLY...]



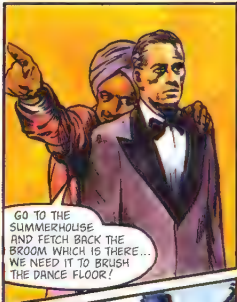
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE! IT IS MY PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE THE FAMOUS HYPNOTIST, RANJI BANGEE—who will give us a demonstration of his remarkable talents.

THE FIRST 'VICTIM' WAS NONE OTHER THAN SIR JAMES...



AMHH! PERFECT... YOU ARE COMPLETELY UNDER MY CONTROL, SIR JAMES! YOU WILL DO AS I SAY...

I WILL DO AS YOU SAY, MASTER!



GO TO THE SUMMERHOUSE AND FETCH BACK THE BROOM WHICH IS THERE... WE NEED IT TO BRUSH THE DANCE FLOOR!

IT'S ALL GOOD, CLEAN FUN FOR THE PARTYMAKERS, BUT...

SUDDENLY, THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE SHATTERED THE STILL NIGHT AIR...

FUNNY WE DIDN'T HAVE THIS RANJI BANGEE ON OUR OFFICIAL GUEST LIST, STEED!



I'VE BEEN THINKING THE SAME! TRY AND FIND MIKE AND ASK HIM TO FOLLOW SIR JAMES — WE DON'T WANT ANYTHING HAPPENING TO HIM NOW!



THAT WAY, MIKE! THROUGH THE BUSHES!

NOTHING WE CAN DO FOR HIM — HE'S BOUGHT IT! BUT THERE'S STILL RANJI BANGEE!

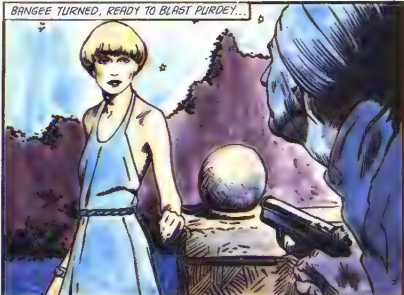


PURDEY WENT IN PURSUIT OF THE FLEEING HYPNOTIST!

WE GOOFED! WE SHOULD HAVE PREVENTED HIM FROM PUTTING SIR JAMES IN A TRANCE... A DEATH TRANCE!

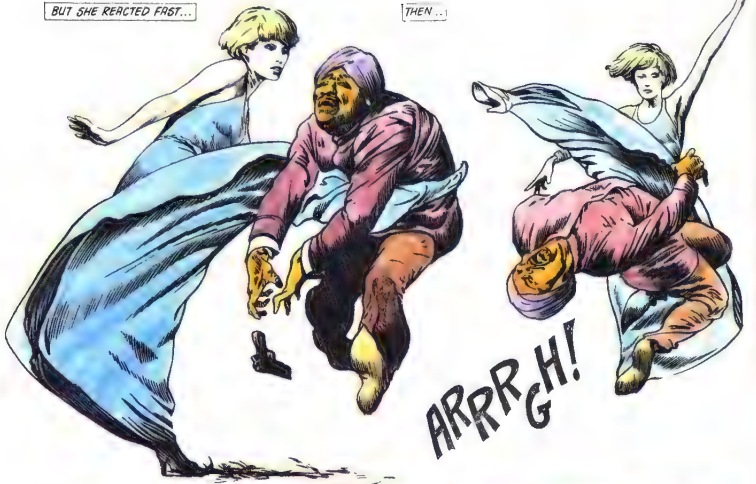


BANGEE TURNED, READY TO BLAST PURDEY...



BUT SHE REACTED FAST...

THEN...



THE APPLAUSE SOUNDED FALSE IN PURDEY'S EARS!

EXCELLENT, PURDEY — THAT'S THE WAY TO ELIMINATE OUR ONLY LEAD!

NEEDLESS TO STATE — THE KILLER ALSO AVOIDED ME!

ALL RIGHT, BOYS — ALL RIGHT! I DIDN'T MEAN TO BREAK HIS NECK!

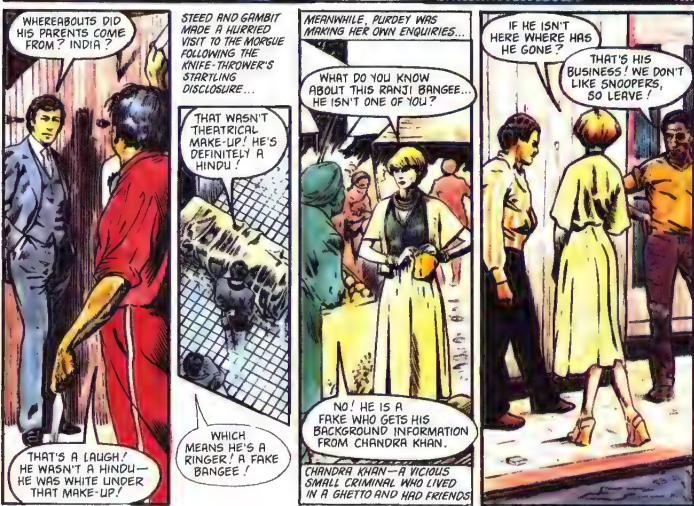
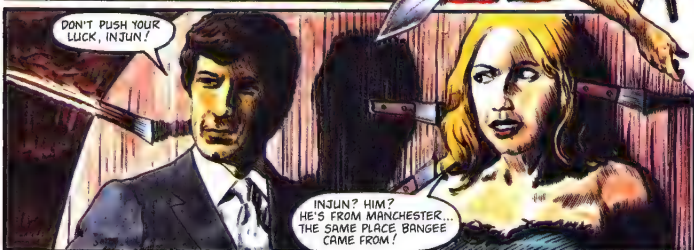
THE FOLLOWING MORNING IN STEED'S HOME...

THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE BIZARRE, TO SAY THE LEAST. THIS BANGEE WAS A LEGITIMATE ENTERTAINER AND HIS INVITATION A SPUR OF THE MOMENT THING BY LADY WHAT'S-HER-NAME!

WHO JUST HAPPENS TO BE A NUT ON ANYTHING TO DO WITH SPIRITUALISM AND MESMERISTS!

THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY THE KILLER WAS **NOT** WORKING WITH BANGEE!

I HAVE AN IDEA! LET'S START CHECKING BANGEE'S MOVEMENTS FROM THE MOMENT HE GOT HIS INVITATION!





AS SHE TRIED TO ENTER THE HOUSE...

I SAID...
LEAVE!

HER FORMER TRAINING AS A BALLET
DANCER MADE PURDEY A FORMIDABLE
OPONENT!

NOTHING LIKE
BEING ONE STEP
AHEAD OF YOUR
ENEMIES!



THAT SAME AFTERNOON
IN STEED'S HOME...

A BUNCH OF
CHEAP MARKET
RACKETEERS
ELEVATED INTO
A TOP FLIGHT
MURDER COVER-
UP! WHAT A
DAY! I'M BEAT!



SOMEBODY HAD TO GIVE
THE ORDERS — BUT WHOM? AND
WHY DID LADY LACEY PICK BANGEE
OF ALL HYPNOTISTS? YOU STAY HERE —
I'LL PICK UP MIKE ON THE WAY AND
DO SOME FURTHER INVESTIGATING.



STEED WENT TO VISIT LADY LACEY...

BUT WHY DID
YOU PICK BANGEE,
LADY LACEY?

IT'S MY FAULT, STEED! I
ENCOURAGED MY WIFE... YOU
SEE, BANGEE ONCE CURED ME!
I WAS A HEAVY SMOKER AND
HE HYPNOTIZED ME INTO
GIVING IT UP!



DID YOU KNOW THAT
THIS BANGEE WAS A
PHONEY, M'LORD?

OH COME NOW — HE
DID CURE MY HUSBAND.
YOU MUST BE WRONG, MR.
STEED — DIDN'T BANGEE
PUT SIR JAMES INTO
A TRANCE?



STEED COULD GET NOTHING ELSE FROM
THE LACEYS BUT...

FOLLOW HIM,
MIKE! I'M SURE HE'S
HOLDING SOMETHING
BACK FROM ME!

I AGREE! HE
MUST KNOW THAT HIS
BANGEE AND THE DEAD
MAN ARE DIFFERENT
HYPNOTISTS!

AFTER A TEN MINUTE DRIVE...

HE'S MET SOMEBODY...
HEY, WAIT! IT'S NONE
OTHER THAN OUR OLD MATE,
YURI GRENKOV! NOW ISN'T
THAT INTERESTING?

IT CHECKS! PURDEY
HAS DISCOVERED THE LINK!
SIR JAMES WAS ABOUT TO
BLACKBALL LACEY FOR HIS
VACANT POSITION.

AT THAT SECOND, YURI GRENKOV SPOTTED GAMBIT
AND PULLED A SILENCED GUN! BUT...

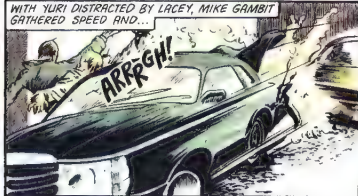
DON'T! THIS HAS
GONE FAR ENOUGH!

OUT OF MY WAY!
GAMBIT HAS TO BE
KILLED!

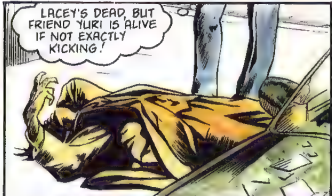
HE MUST BE
DESPERATE TO TAKE
A CHANCE LIKE THIS!
TWO CAN PLAY THAT
GAME, THOUGH!



WITH YURI DISTRACTED BY LACEY, MIKE GAMBIT
GATHERED SPEED AND...



LACEY'S DEAD, BUT
FRIEND YURI IS ALIVE
IF NOT EXACTLY
KICKING!



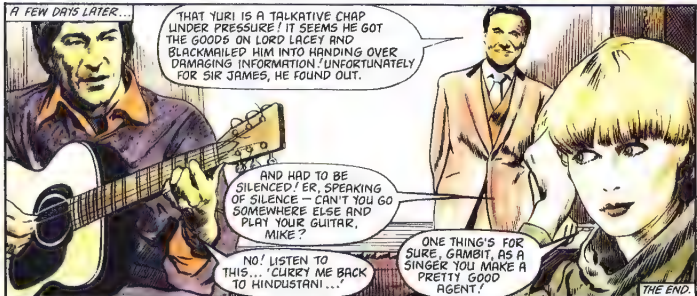
A FEW DAYS LATER...

THAT YURI IS A TALKATIVE CHAP
UNDER PRESSURE! IT SEEMS HE GOT
THE GOODS ON LORD LACEY AND
BLACKMAILED HIM INTO HANDING OVER
DAMAGING INFORMATION! UNFORTUNATELY
FOR SIR JAMES, HE FOUND OUT.

AND HAD TO BE
SILENCED! ER, SPEAKING
OF SILENCE - CAN'T YOU GO
SOMEWHERE ELSE AND
PLAY YOUR GUITAR,
MIKE?

NO! LISTEN TO
THIS... 'CURRY ME BACK
TO HINDUSTANI!...

ONE THING'S FOR
SURE, GAMBIT, AS A
SINGER YOU MAKE A
PRETTY GOOD
AGENT!



THE END.

THE NEW AVENGERS QUIZ

Here it is—a super quiz all about your favourite TV programme. The answers to the questions set can all be found in this book, but to all true fans of **THE NEW AVENGERS** answering them will be as easily as falling for the lovely Purdey. To all those who get stuck, we've listed the answers on the back-inside cover.

- 1 Which of the present team of New Avengers is the only survivor from the original series?
- 2 Gambit admits to being a 'leg-man'. But in which TV programme was actor Gareth Hunt a footman?
- 3 Which James Bond film did Joanna Lumley appear in?
- 4 Joanna comes from a military background. What rank did her father achieve?
- 5 Her training in this profession has helped Purdey lead many a villain a dance. What is that profession?
- 6 What can Steed's umbrella sometimes double as?
- 7 You can't really call Gambit a drop-out, but that does give a clue as to which crack regiment he once belonged to. Name it.
- 8 The place where Purdey studied the martial arts sounds a bit like a sneaky look. Where was it?
- 9 This well known jungle beast is a clue to Steed's car. What is it?
- 10 What was the title of the programme that was the fore-runner to the Avengers' series?
- 11 What famous British actor starred in that series?
- 12 Honor Blackman played the first Avenger's girl. Her name put the wind up most villains. What was it?
- 13 The title of this play which Gareth Hunt starred in is something you couldn't accuse Mike Gambit of. What was it?
- 14 A part in this particular film could of had a real bite in it for Joanna. What was it?
- 15 Finally, Steed has been known to talk through his hat. Why?







MEET THE STARS...

Gareth Hunt



Deadly, steel-eyed Mike Gambit is played by handsome actor Gareth Hunt, a respected theatrical actor who has risen to worldwide television fame only recently; first as an ambitious footman called Frederick in the long-running series *Upstairs, Downstairs*, and then, ultimately, in the *New Avengers*.

Gareth is 33 years old, and was born in Battersea in London. He claims to have spent a fairly ordinary childhood, but his love of acting developed early. He appeared in several school plays and was especially fond of drama classes, deciding that he wanted to be an actor when he left. But the school provided little opportunity for him to get into the acting profession, and he ended up joining the merchant navy, sailing to the farthest corners of the world at the age of only fifteen. He stayed in the Merchant Navy for six years, though things were obviously not quite perfect, for he jumped ship in New Zealand with a couple of his mates. They got away with it for a while, doing odd jobs,

but jumping ship being an offence, they were eventually caught and held until the next ship going back to Britain was in port.

On leave from the navy, Gareth worked as a stage hand in London theatres, learning all the time. When he finally left the high seas for good, he had a variety of jobs ranging from digging up roads and selling door-to-door, to working in the studios of ITV and learning design with the BBC.

At night, he acted with the Mount View Theatre Club finally learning enough to pass an audition for a drama school. He spent two years studying at the Webber Douglas School, and then got his first professional acting job with the Ipswich Arts theatre. That was followed by a small part in a TV programme as a soldier in the army of Queen Victoria, though his early acting career was centred mostly on the stage.

He played at the Bristol Old Vic, then appeared in London for six months in *Conduct Unbecoming*. After that, he went back into repertory for a couple of years. But now he was playing leading roles, and the wide-ranging experience he built up was enormous, playing everything from Shakespeare to musicals.

He then went to the Royal Court theatre, and did a few television roles in between times, before joining the Royal Shakespeare Company for a year, and also of the National Theatre, perhaps the ultimate triumph for a stage actor, though he admits he doesn't get as much chance to work there as he'd like. Television work has taken up most of his time recently.

Nationwide fame finally arrived a couple of years ago when he had an important role in several episodes of *Upstairs, Downstairs*, a programme which also got his face known in the United States when it was shown there, and in several other countries. And now, as the suave and self-assured Mike Gambit, his fame seems to be totally established.

But away from the cameras, Gareth is a private person, shunning the adulation which makes it so difficult for a star to lead an everyday life. He's a bachelor with a regular girlfriend, enjoys a pint at his London local, but only lets himself go with his own group of friends. And when he does, he's noted for having a wicked sense of humour, and a great talent for mimicry, taking off anyone from Richard Burton to Humphrey Bogart and James Cagney.

It's hard work on the *New Avengers*, with each of the twenty-six episodes in a series being filmed in only ten days. But acting has always been Gareth's first love, and things are looking good at the mo-

ment . . . and should continue to do so for as long as the *New Avengers* is with us. . .

The many roles of New Avenger Mike Gambit as portrayed by actor Gareth Hunt.



GO AND GRIN SOMEWHERE ELSE!

Purdey smiled as Steed feigned a shudder. For Mike Gambit this impromptu visit to the family vaults was a dead loss.

"Great! Uncle Harold," Purdey said, fingers lightly brushing across an ornate tomb, "was the family black sheep. He made three fortunes operating a criminal ring in the Colonies." She laughed lightly. "You know, I like him best of all. He had this talent for mayhem."

Steed tapped Gambit's shoulder, with his umbrella. "The old boy owned diamond mines in South Africa. He stole from himself and gained the sympathy of a home government which believed he was doing his best to stuff the treasury. He got a knighthood for his efforts and the boot out of Africa when the boys there discovered his deviousness."

Purdey's eyes twinkled mischievously. "You've done your homework," she told Steed. "But you left out the most important bit: Uncle Harold is reputed to have 'cashed' for cool £1,000,000 in precious stones on the estate before he became a skeleton in the closet."

They left the vaults and strolled in the delightful grounds, near the church which Purdey's stepfather, the bishop, used to try out his various sermons before inducting them on a cathedral congregation. It was Sunday and afternoon. For the space of twenty-four hours the trio were enjoying a welcome break between assignments. Soaking up atmosphere and the bishop's hospitality.

The ringing of church bells shattered the calm. Purdey frowned as Gambit's sober face asked an unspoken question.

"Hadden't somebody better investigate?" Steed asked, heading for the church.

"I don't understand it," Purdey said, tossing her lace shawl back from an arm and following John Steed. "The bells are never rung except for a service!"

Steed entered the church tower by a small, narrow door. He halted in respect of a small, neat fitting over his distinguished, strong features. The bell ropes jerked as if invisible hands were pulling them, the clappers high above now merely clinking off the solid brass bells.

"No-one could have gotten out without us seeing," Gambit said, sensing a mystery here.

Purdey pushed past her companions and climbed down through a trap-door. She stopped halfway down steps and gasped. "Steed! Gambit!" Her voice sounded tense. Her finger pointing dramatically at a crumpled shape by the foot of the steps.

Steed came to join Purdey as she bent by the corpse. A knife stuck from under the ribcage, blood soaking onto a neat business suit.

"George Hinchcliffe!" Steed said softly. "He was supposed to meet me this evening."

Purdey's eyes flamed accusation. "You didn't mention it to me! This was a careless, no contact visit to my family... remember?"

Steed smiled an apology. "George insisted! Something about a traitor in the ranks." He felt the dead man's face, casually started emptying pockets as he continued speaking. "Killed within the past five minutes. Death wasn't instantaneous, which explains why he chose to warn us by ringing a bell."

Mike Gambit picked a piece of crimson (treaded material off the floor. "Does this look familiar?" he asked Purdey.

"No, my stepfather's robe?" Purdey defensively countered.

"Don't get the jitters," Mike smiled. "No, it isn't from a churchman's garment. The material is too cheap for that." He winked down at Steed who was also amused.

"You pair!" Purdey snapped and hurried up the steps, long legs flushing in her wake. She was extremely proud of those legs, and the dancer's power in them. Many a villain had cause to remember how she fought, an elegant, balletic but lethal version of the ancient, French martial art of Panache... with a few karate or kung-fu kicks thrown in for good measure.

Carefully studying the ground near the church, Purdey caught sight of a crimson-clad figure melting into shrubbery. She wondered if, perhaps, she was imagining things. The cowl swung at the last second and she saw a horrific, grinning skull where there should have been a face.

"Go and grin somewhere else," Purdey thought and took off in pursuit. She knew these grounds the way a gardener knows every bulb in every flower-bed. She cut across a lawn, came out by the iron-railed vaults.

Meanwhile, inside the church, John Steed had replaced Hinchcliffe's belongings. There had been nothing to indicate why George wanted a meeting. "I liked old George," Steed said softly. "He wasn't brilliant but he did have a nose for inside corruption."

Gambit had a sudden inspiration. "Wasn't he attached to that bullion detail that lost its best man and the shipment?"

Fingering his chin in deep concentration, Steed said, "You're right, Mike! You know? I'm beginning to smell a rat. Hinchcliffe and bullion. Purdey and her departed Uncle Harold."

"Great! Uncle Harold," Purdey's voice, corrected as her head appeared inside the trap-door. "Maybe your rat has been gnawing on my intruder's face, Steed!"

Gambit sighed. "Explain yourself, Purdey, he said, suffering from mere man's disease... the one brought about from listening to the illogical rantings of a woman's mind."

"Come outside," Purdey waited until the pair joined her under the shadow of the church tower. Then, showing what had happened, she explained her encounter with the crimson-garbed spectre.

"A grinning skull?" Gambit asked finally. "Wearing a crimson habit made from this

material!" he added, displaying the snippet he'd found near Hinchcliffe's corpse.

Steed tut-tutted as Purdey stared.

"One thing for sure," Gambit said solemnly. "Your spook couldn't have vanished into thin air. Ghosts don't make a habit of wearing hand-made clothes!"

Purdey said: "Ouch!"

And Steed held up a hand for quiet as the bishop came from the house and approached them.

"Did you hear the bells?" the bishop asked.

Steed nodded, left explanations until afterwards. "Have you had any strangers hanging about recently, Bishop?" he asked.

"Not to my knowledge," Purdey's stepfather replied with a huge, beaming smile. "But then, I'm unaware of almost anything that happens—my work keeps me fully occupied."

"A learned man like yourself," Steed flattered, "must surely have studied the legend of Great Uncle Harold's supposedly missing fortune..."

The bishop laughed and wagged a finger in Purdey's direction. "She's been filling your heads with tales of filthy wealth, I see." He cluck-clucked, adding: "Yes, I *did* search the old records once. Frankly, there is no evidence to prove—or disprove—the fable. Harold was a rake. A black sheep with a penchant for secrets. It isn't even certain how or where he died."

Gambit lost patience, asked outright, "Is there a hidden entrance to the vaults, sir?"

"Several!" came the surprising answer. "Come—let me show you..." The bishop gathered his churchy 'skirts' and led the way past the iron gates and high arch of the vaults. He opened a secondary, small iron gate and pulled aside some brush. A dark, circular hole was revealed.

"I never knew about this," Purdey said, frowning.

Her stepfather raised bushy eyebrows. "Nor did I until your mother *just* happened to show me one day. That woman is a goldmine of information which she leaks one little iota at a time. Actually," and he grinned, "she does not believe these disclosures are important."

Purdey asked, "How many more are there?"

"One behind the drawing room panels," the bishop counted, ticking off fingers as he spoke. "Another from the stables and, so I'm told, one from the church tower..."

"Ah-ha!" Steed said, a satisfied expression flitting across his strong features. "Old George wasn't knifed in the open after all!"

Gambit got down on hands and knees and peered into the tunnel. "No-one has travelled this passage in a century," he acidly remarked. "There's been a roof fall—there is moss growing undisturbed."

"We'll try the church one," Steed said and smiled at the bishop. "That is if you have no objections, sir?"

"Not at all..." The bishop mopped his fore-

head with an enormous spotted handkerchief. "You must excuse me—I want to scribble a sermon..." He walked away, totally unconcerned with the daily problems confronting his stepdaughter and her intriguing friends.

Back in the church, Steed and Gambit carefully moved George Hinchcliffe's corpse to a more comfortable bench in the choir-changing room. Purdey, meanwhile, examined the tower walls—tap-tapping from stone to stone without finding a hollow sound to indicate a secret tunnel. She had almost reached the end of her quest when...

"Steed!" she shouted and drew back as a section of wall silently swung inwards.

Mike Gambit didn't wait when he saw the tunnel. He entered and sniffed indelicately. "Damp—smells decidedly unhealthy!" he said.

Steed examined the door mechanism. "Been oiled," he mused. "And these are new parts..." He showed Purdey a bright metal fitting, screws and bolts. Squaring his shoulders he asked, "Shall we join the party?"

Purdey smiled. "Let's!" She went into the tunnel, spoke to Gambit. "Lead on, McGambit!"

Steed closed the secret door behind him, and the tunnel suddenly flooded with artificial light. "Mmmm, another innovation," he muttered and took up a rearguard position as Mike started to advance. The tunnel sloped gradually down into the bowels of the earth, moisture trickling from its roof—here and there curving round rock formations.

Gambit halted so quickly that Purdey bumped into him. "Listen!" Mike ordered.

Purdey withheld a reminder to Mike what would happen if he stopped abruptly again and cocked her lovely head. The gentle hum of machines at work sounded faintly; now and then interrupted by the harsher, louder click-click of a computer or a typewriter.

Steed smiled mysteriously to himself and made a cryptic remark: "They've stretched *that* £100,000..."

Purdey glared. "I've got an awful premonition this isn't a surprise to you."

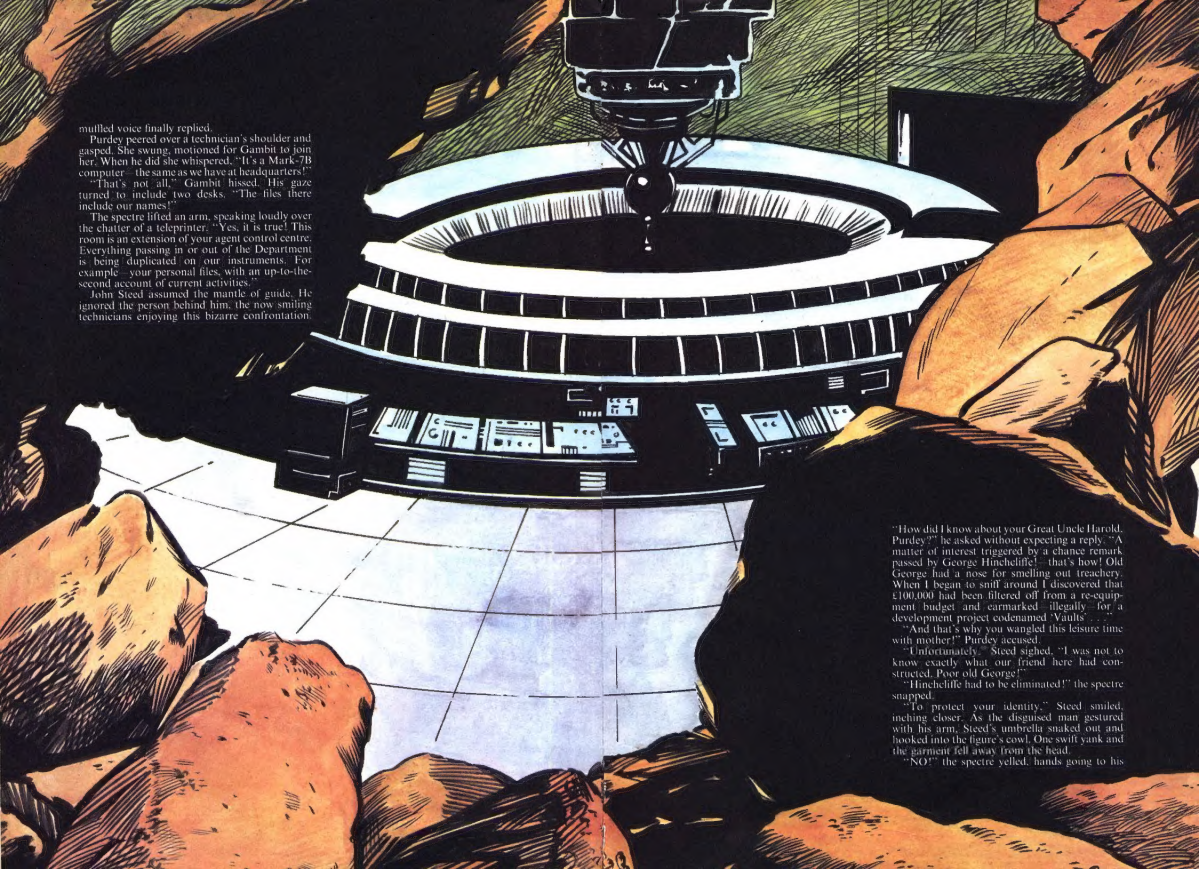
Squeezing past his companions, Steed simply shrugged and continued the journey to a metal door. Using his umbrella handle he knocked, waiting patiently like an expected guest until the door quietly opened.

Purdey gasped. There, across a huge room which looked like a communications centre, stood her spectre. Between them were technicians seated before a control console whose lights kept winking and blinking in a variety of colours.

Steed strode across the room without so much as a glance at the intricate equipment. When only a few feet from the grinning-skulled figure he halted and said in a soft voice: "I suspected something like this. I suppose you think it kills two birds with a single stone..."

A deep, rumbling laugh came from the crimson-clothed figure. "Five to be precise, Steed!" a





muffled voice finally replied.

Purdey peered over a technician's shoulder and gasped. She swung, motioned for Gambit to join her. When he did she whispered, "It's a Mark-7B computer - the same as we have at headquarters!"

"That's not all," Gambit hissed. His gaze turned to include two desks. "The files there include our names!"

The spectre lifted an arm, speaking loudly over the chatter of a teleprinter. "Yes, it is true! This room is an extension of your agent control centre. Everything passing in or out of the Department is being duplicated on our instruments. For example - your personal files, with an up-to-the-second account of current activities."

John Steed assumed the mantle of guide. He ignored the person behind him, the now smiling technicians enjoying this bizarre confrontation.

"How did I know about your Great Uncle Harold, Purdey?" he asked without expecting a reply. "A matter of interest triggered by a chance remark passed by George Hinchcliffe! - that's how! Old George had a nose for smelling out treachery. When I began to sniff around I discovered that £100,000 had been filtered off from a re-equipment budget and earmarked illegally for a development project codenamed 'Vaults' . . ."

"And that's why you wangled this leisure time with mother!" Purdey accused.

"Unfortunately," Steed sighed, "I was not to know exactly what our friend here had constructed. Poor old George!"

"Hinchcliffe had to be eliminated!" the spectre snapped.

"To protect your identity," Steed smiled, inching closer. As the disguised man gestured with his arm, Steed's umbrella snaked out and hooked into the figure's cowl. One swift yank and the garment fell away from the head.

"NO!" the spectre yelled, hands going to his



skull mask.

Too late! Steed moved in fast, crooked the umbrella round an ankle and at the same moment grasping the mask.

Purdey stared in disbelief!

Mike Gambit crouched, gun held in both hands as he covered the technicians who came to their feet. "Don't!" he warned.

Steed smiled and dangled the horrific mask in hand. "Charles Wyatt-Bell," he said. "Scourge of Hitler's famous Death's Head legion and holder of the V.C. Patriot par excellence . . ."

"A Scottish patriot!" the greying, lean-faced man snarled. "We are all true Scots . . ." His hand covered the technicians with a wave. "When Scotland is again a nation we intend to have our own organization . . ."

Purdey caught sight of a furtive move and gracefully executed a ballet leap which ended with a high kick that caught the culprit technician under his jaw. The man slammed backwards, out cold.

The distraction was all the Scotsmen wanted. Before Gambit could draw a bead on the nearest a snaking cable whipped against his chest. Off-balance, Mike roared: "Look out, Steed!"

Purdey saw a revolver appear from under a white smock and its barrel swing towards John Steed. She seized a heavy book from a table,

threw it in a continuous movement. Even as it sailed straight to its mark, Steed planted a foot in Wyatt-Bell's stomach and hissed: "Down boy!" as if speaking to a Skye terrier.

Mike Gambit streaked across the room, shoulder catching another technician behind the knees. Going down in a tangle, Gambit brought his arm back and chopped the man's neck.

Purdey vaulted a desk, landed a perfect uppercut which K.O.-ed the last of the opposition. Coming to his feet, Gambit grinned and made a mock bow to the queen of the knock-out artists.

Letting the pair tie-up the Scotsmen, Steed bent and picked up the book Purdey had thrown. He began to laugh and offered it to her. "See that this is returned to your stepfather's library . . ." He read the title aloud for Gambit's benefit. "A rare first edition of 'Empires At Any Cost' by . . ."

Purdey rolled her eyes, interrupted. "By Harold Purdey—Great Uncle Harold!"

"There goes the missing loot legend," Gambit smiled. "If the old boy had a million cached away he wouldn't have had to write for a living!"

Steed shook his head thoughtfully. "I suppose you're right," he allowed generously. "All the authors I've met are constantly in need . . ." He swung his umbrella majestically. "Shall we return to the business of enjoying what is left of our leisure time?"

New Avengers Crossword

Solutions

ACROSS:

1. Kenya 2. Blackman 5. Rhonda 8. Gambit
12. Test pilot 13. Wheel 14. New 15. Adherer
20. Taurus 21. RADA 24. Junia 25. Umbrella
28. Avengers 29. Hunt 30. Emma Peel
31. Peking

DOWN:

1. Karate 3. Mother 4. Newell 6. Oyster
7. Dope 9. Actress 10. Bowler 11. Gliders
16. MGB 17. Racing 18. Ballet 19. Tara King
22. Museum 23. Grouse 26. Gale 27. True.

New Avengers Quiz

Answers

- 1 Patrick Macnee
- 2 'Upstairs, Downstairs'
- 3 'On Her Majesty's Secret Service'
- 4 Major
- 5 Ballet dancer
- 6 Sword stick
- 7 Parachute regiment
- 8 Peking
- 9 Jaguar
- 10 'Police Surgeon'
- 11 Ian Hendry
- 12 Cathy Gale
- 13 'Conduct Unbecoming'
- 14 'The Satanic Rites of Dracula'
- 15 Because he has a miniature receiver built into his bowler.



THE NEW AVENGERS



Rainbow
Books

